Caring, Power, and the Emotional and Organizational Architecture of Life in Schools

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to those students who taught me what it means to care as a teacher, and also to those students who I never learned how to care for.

Abstract

Purpose: Schools are expected to care for students, but many students do not experience care at school- especially students from historically underserved populations. One reason why implicates the way that school adults use their positional and relational power inside and outside of classrooms. The purpose of this study is to examine how adults, individually and collectively, think about and use their power in efforts to care for students, and how students experience these efforts.

Research Methods/Approach: This study employs a grounded theory approach and utilizes participant observation and photo elicitation interviews of students and staff at two middle schools.

Findings: At the classroom level, caring and power intersect in ways that reveal teachers' understanding and support of student emotions. Teachers with stable caring relations often view care and control as *complements,* whereas teachers with less stable caring relations view care and control as *substitutes*. At the organizational level, the existence of schoolwide expectations and common beliefs amongst teachers had implications for whether caring was practiced in a consistent way throughout the school.

Conclusions and Implications: This study reveals the importance of leadership support for building teachers' reflectiveness and decision-making regarding supporting students' emotions. It also reveals the importance of consistent beliefs about caring and students' potential amongst school adults to build capacity and solve organization-wide problems.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

Those who are without compassion cannot see what is seen through the eyes of compassion.
Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Miracle of Mindfulness* (1975, p. 105)

The concept of *caring* in education is extraordinarily resistant to easy definition. Education researchers have generated a great deal of evidence that feeling cared for in school significantly benefits students in a variety of ways. Students who feel cared for in school are more academically engaged (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006; Marks, 2000; Wentzel, 1997), make greater gains in their social and emotional learning (Battistich et al, 1995; Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010), and feel more closely connected to both school and their broader community (Finn & Rock, 1997; McKamey, 2011; Riley, 2013b). Of particular importance, given the present emphasis on equity and eliminating educational achievement gaps, is the finding that feeling cared for in schools has particularly positive effects for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Conchas, 2001; Gonzalez & Padilla, 2001; Wallace & Chhuon, 2014).

Several recent works have argued for an increased emphasis on creating caring schools (Louis, Murphy, & Smylie, 2016; Smylie, Murphy, & Louis, in press). Caring is important to achieving the proper balance between academic press and social support that characterizes the most effective schools (Louis, Murphy, & Smylie, 2016). There is also evidence that efforts to create a caring school environment are neglected in a policy environment emphasizing academic press (Smylie, Murphy, & Louis, in press). Indeed, although parents and teachers widely acknowledge the primary importance of caring in

schools, more students see academic achievement as what is most emphasized in schools (Weissbourd & Jones, 2014). Being cared for (and thus learning how to care for others) is central to the human experience, and an essential part of human development over the lifespan (Gilligan, 1981; Noddings, 2013). But it appears that schools, assumed to be caring institutions, are often failing (or lack the organizational tools) to be caring as a matter of practice.

School adults are intentional about trying to produce a caring environment in schools, but their efforts to create this environment also necessitate exercising power. Efforts to balance caring and power at central to a core conundrum of school life: how to maintain a learning environment that is both consistently orderly and robustly supportive. This study shows that the ways in which adults negotiate this balance- both individually in classrooms and collaboratively at the organizational level helps to determine whether spaces for student learning are engaging, equitable, and productive. The ways that school adults conceptualize and operationalize the types and functions of caring and power, and the ways that care and control are allowed to substitute and complement one another in schools reveals a good deal about how schools generate (or fail to generate) socially and emotionally supportive environments.

Defining Caring

Although there is ample evidence of the positive *effects* of caring in schools, this does not shed particular light on what caring *is.* In this section, I'll present some of the most widely cited conceptualizations of caring. The intent is not to clarify absolutely

what caring is: there is no widely accepted theory of educational caring. Rather, I offer an unpolished sketch that should nonetheless uncover some of caring's most salient features.

Society expects schools to be caring places, but, "its meaning in schools is vague, ambiguous, unsettled, and weakly explicated" (Louis, Murphy, & Smylie, 2016, p. 312). Part of the challenge is that caring is intersubjective: in order for caring to occur, both the one-caring and the one-cared-for must think of the action as caring- caring must be both intended and received (Noddings, 2013). Noddings (2001) suggests that when a school adult unilaterally describes himself or herself as caring this is *virtue caring:* wanting what is best for someone and working hard to help achieve that. However, it does not rise to the level of *relational caring*, where *both* parties acknowledge being in a caring relation. In fact, Noddings argues that a sense of virtue caring can occlude relational caring by blinding the one-caring to the expressed needs of the one-cared-for (2001). For example, a teacher may strongly believe that a student requires college preparatory mathematics, but a student who has expressed a desire to take a class in auto mechanics may see this as uncaring (Noddings, 2006).

There are a number of ways of describing the nature and characteristics of caring. For Noddings (2002; 2013), caring is a way of being in relation with someone. This relation is characterized by attentiveness, motivational displacement (one-caring directing energy toward one-cared-for), action, and recognition on the part of one-cared-for (Noddings, 2002, pp. 11-19). Tronto identifies caring as comprised of attentiveness, responsibility (a sense that one is bound to respond to needs), competence (the ability to provide successful care), and responsiveness (an ability to consider how others see the

world and respond) (1994, pp. 125-137). In reviewing the literature on caring, other scholars have developed attributes common to caring relationships. In addition to attentiveness and motivational displacement, caring is situationally driven, potentially reciprocal, and authentic (Louis, Murphy, & Smylie, 2016). Another construction suggests that caring is bound up in aims (caring must have a purpose), virtues and mindsets (it must be driven by a sense of what is good), and competency (the ability to deeply understand others and know how to act effectively in a caring way) (Smylie, Murphy, & Louis, 2016).

The quote at the beginning of this introduction could apply to caring just as easily as compassion. When one is in a caring relation with another, it qualitatively changes the tenor of the entire connection: the change is not one of degree, but of type. Scholars studying caring in schools find that the potential affective impact of this change (from neutral or uncaring to caring) is substantial.

In addition to the typfications made in the works above (which I view as complementary rather than competing), I'll make three additional observations:

1. *Caring is distinct from <u>care.</u>* Care can be rendered in a way that is caring or uncaring (Smylie, Murphy, & Louis, in press). Caring, as noted above, is marked by attentiveness and motivational displacement- the intention and manner of acting make a difference.
2. *Relatedly, it is not possible to generalize an action as caring.* Actions can be done in a caring way, but the whether or not the action is caring depends on the context, the particular situation, and the way the action is intended and received.

3. *Caring is not a one-off interaction.* Although any and all interactions can add or detract from the degree of caring in a relationship, caring most directly describes an attribute of the relationship, not the interaction. Although longer relationships are likely to have deeper wells of interactions that contribute to caring (or uncaring), even short relationships can be caring in the right circumstances (Louis, Murphy, & Smylie, 2016, p. 315).

Understanding these distinctions is important because they underscore that caring is a way of being in relation with another person. It does not consist in single actions, or even necessarily in actions designed to care for another. Rather, the emotional intention and reception of actions are what determines whether or not an interaction is caring.

One final question about caring behooves consideration. What is meant when one refers to a school as a caring organization (Tronto, 2010)? Or, a caring community (Battistich et al, 1995; Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997)? Or, as possessing a caring climate or culture (Riley & Docking, 2004; Victor & Cullen, 1988)? Or, indeed, as a caring space (Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2007)? The view of caring articulated above is essentially relational, yet scholars regularly talk about caring as an attribute of schools or organizations. This is an area deserving of better theorizing to add rigor and depth to the shorthand. For the purposes of the present study, it is enough to say that to describe a school as a caring organization appears to refer to the density of caring relations in the school. For students and adults in caring schools, developing caring relations appears to be a *habit* or *practice.* Understanding why these habits develop is likely to involve understanding enabling conditions for caring (Louis, Murphy, & Smylie, 2016).

Moreover, understanding the shared beliefs and assumptions of school adults, and how these beliefs are translated into actions influences how thoroughly

A Challenge (and Opportunity) for Caring

Many students experience schools as uncaring places because of the ways that school adults elect to use their power to create particular classroom and school environments (Duncan Andrade, 2007; Sarason, 1971; Valenzuela, 1999). For example, a teacher might discipline a student for talking to peers during direct instruction: the teacher is using his/her positional power to emphasize the importance of listening, presumably because the teacher thinks this is in the student's best interest. The student may recognize the teacher's action as caring, but the student may also believe that the conversation with his/her peer is more important and thus see the teacher as uncaring. The way teachers and other school adults employ this positional power will impact, especially over time, whether students feel cared for in school.

School personnel, acting in what they see as the best interest of students, use their power to legitimize certain types of student behavior and outcomes, while sanctioning others (Duncan Andrade, 2007; Valenzuela, 1999). Although caring is rooted in relationships between school staff and students, important decisions about the use of power to create a caring environment for students are negotiated at the organizational level (in discussions amongst school adults, or unilaterally by school leaders)- for example, what behaviors are rewarded and sanctioned, what style of pedagogy is

employed, what cultural traits and extracurricular achievements are highlighted, and even sentiments about how students perceive school and therefore how to act toward them.

A few brief vignettes may serve to clarify this idea.

- A school excuses the state-tournament bound football team from certain assignments, but makes no accommodation for a small group of students who are absent to attend an important cultural festival.
- In a push to increase time-on-task, the school staff begins to harshly discipline students who are tardy to class for socializing with friends, but mostly ignores students who are quietly unproductive.
- A group of teachers decide to "go easy on" a group of young women who are responsible for caring for younger siblings after school.

In each of these examples, school adults are using positional power to shape expectations for students in school. Likewise, in each case the teachers can claim to be motivated by care and acting in the students' best interest (and in each case they may be right). Yet, students may also feel unsupported, and can claim that the school is being inconsistent: there is danger that students may begin to see school as an uncaring place.

Caring and power in schools intersect with issues of *control*. In elementary school, school staff members are expected to exercise a fairly high degree of control over students. A caring teaching aide may strongly speak to a student to get the student to stop running with scissors- the aide may yell or exclaim. The errant student may have been enjoying running with scissors, and may feel angry or hurt at being yelled at. However, this student is still likely to understand (perhaps later) that the aide was acting in his best

interest. In this situation, caring and control (power) are quite aligned. By high school, students are expected to operate with considerable independence compared to elementary students. Although the boundary-pushing that attends high school students' developmental stage means that these students are more likely to chafe at control, most students are still likely to acknowledge that teachers' efforts to control certain aspects of their school experience are borne of caring. Yet, at all levels of schooling, certain efforts at control are likely to make relations seem uncaring: school adults are engaged in a constant balancing act, and a perpetual negotiation with students over the terms of engagement in school (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985).

Defining Power

Understanding the intersection of power and caring in schools is important to understanding why students do (or do not) experience schools as caring places, as well as developing an understanding of how beliefs and decisions lead (or do not lead) to caring actions. Unfortunately, power has proven no easier to define than caring. The political scientist Robert Dahl has noted, "to define the concept 'power' in a way that seems to catch the central intuitively understood meaning of the word must inevitably result in a formal definition that is not easy to apply in concrete research problems" (1957, p. 202). As Dahl's words imply, there is no widely accepted definition or theory of power. Resolving this issue is far beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, I briefly sketch a few notions of power and how power operates in schools.

First, some scholars view power as the motivating impetus for most social interaction. Operating from a critical lens, scholars such as Foucault (1977; 1980), Bourdieu (1977; 1986), and Giroux (1997; 2006) view power as tending to oppress less advantaged groups or to reproduce the existing social order. These thinkers differ in the extent to which they leave room for agency: Foucault believes that the dominant discourse operates *through* nearly everyone, while Giroux views discourse as contestable. All of them, though, place the importance of power front and center as a basic social process.

Other scholars take a more quotidian view of power, suggesting that it is merely influence or an ability to shape events (Pfeffer, 1981). Many scholars do view schools as essentially political sites, where the direction of the school and the meaning of events is contested (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991a). Another view holds that schools are essentially authoritarian in order to maintain a precarious equilibrium among stakeholders (Waller, 1932, p. 9). One powerful metaphor, in *The Shopping Mall High School*, suggests that teachers and students are counterparties at the negotiating table, who agree to treaties to keep the peace (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985).

The contours and implications of these understandings of power will be explicated in more depth below. A context-specific definition of power will need to emerge through the course of this study, and so the views presented above are intended to sensitize to possible explanations rather than to resolve the question altogether. It is worth noting that several of the few scholars who have studied the intersection of caring and power in schools in the past have begun their studies with a jaundiced view that

synonymizes power with oppression, but have concluded their studies by suggesting that power has moral uses in schools (Alder, 2002; Noblit, 1993). The safest ground appears to be awareness of power without judgment of its effects.

Summary and Overview of Chapters

In this opening section, I have attempted to provide some clarity about the ways that scholars have defined caring and power in school settings, though I have not fully resolved the meanings of these terms. Being cared for in schools has powerful benefits for students. Exploring the ways school adults use their positional and relational power in attempting to care for students, and the way students receive this intention, is likely to shed insight into why so many students experience schools as uncaring places. The next section explores the literatures on education caring and power in greater depth, examines the few studies that do consider the intersection of caring and power, and considers the potential of middle school as a site to examine the relationship between these two important aspects of social life in schools.

In chapter two, I offer a sensitizing literature review of educational caring and power in schools and offer some suggestions for areas of study that bear particular scrutiny. In chapter three, I describe the theoretical approach and data collection methods of this study. In chapter four, I offer a broad survey of some of the key events and trends at each school during the year the study took place, in order to more fully contextualize my findings. In chapter five, I focus on the ways that caring and power intersect with the broader emotional life of classrooms. Chapter six moves beyond the classroom to the

ways that decisions about organizational problems intersect with caring and power. In chapter seven, I conclude by offering a few propositions about caring and power in schools, especially the ways that they substitute for and complement one another in schools.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

The purpose of this section is to offer a review of the literature relevant to educational caring and power; one aspect of the ways that caring and power intersect in the social life of schools that bears considerable additional scrutiny is how the contours of power and care are navigated at the organizational level. This literature review is intended to be sensitizing rather than generative of a framework by itself. It is important to note that there is no existing theory of caring and power in education, so one important intention of this study is theory development. I will cover, in turn, the literature on educational caring, some useful perspectives on power, and the small extant literature where caring and power have been considered together. Because the proposed setting of this study is a pair of middle schools, this review will briefly consider the literature on middle schools, with a particular emphasis on caring and its effects in middle schools.

Educational Caring

As noted above, educational caring eludes easy definition. However, caring in schools has been considered both theoretically and empirically by a number of scholars. Although this grouping is imperfect, these scholars can be roughly characterized as approaching caring from three schools of thought: (1) caring as a way of being in a relationship, (2) caring as a complex process that is interpreted differently by people with different cultural backgrounds, and (3) caring as it occurs in organizational contexts. I will begin each section by highlighting the work of an exemplar theorist writing from this perspective, and then further develop that conception with the views of other scholars.

Each of these three perspectives explores caring primarily from the perspective of caring for and about students, but teachers are impacted by caring too: I will briefly explore this as well.

Caring as relationship.

Understanding caring as a way of being in a relationship(or a series of relational acts) is the most common conception of educational caring, and Nel Noddings is the most frequently cited (and prolific) explicator of this conception. Noddings (1984; 1992; 2001; 2002; 2005; 2006; 2013) views caring as based in the relationship between two people. Noddings' philosophy of care is rooted in a feminine ethic of care: good caring in schools is essentially *familial* in its orientation. In Noddings' view, caring is an intersubjective act: it is not enough to profess that one cares for another, the intention must also be accepted as caring by the one-cared-for. Noddings refers to generic professions of care on the part of, for example, teachers, as "virtue caring" (2001, p. 36). This sort of caring refers to actions that are intended as caring, but not necessarily received as caring. Thus, it is not the specific behaviors that are caring or uncaring, but the way the behaviors are intended and received (Noddings, 2005). In order for caring to occur, Noddings argues, the person caring for a student (one-caring) must be both attentive and sustained: one-off interactions do not characterize caring relationships (2013).

A closely related observation is that caring must respond to needs. These needs can be either expressed by the person receiving care (one-cared-for) or inferred by the one-caring. Often, Noddings notes, there can be conflicts between expressed and inferred

needs that prevent a caring relation from occurring: "[i]f [as the one-cared-for] my expressed needs are not treated positively, or at least sensitively, I will likely not feel cared for. Attempts to care frequently misfire this way" (2005, p. 148). This interruption of a caring relationship can occur easily in a school setting: a student may express a need to learn the rudiments of personal finance, while a teacher may infer a need for the student to learn college-preparatory English composition. Of course, this interaction does not occur in isolation: it occurs in the context of a student/teacher relationship mediated by a particular school climate. The way this mismatch between expressed and inferred needs is navigated has implications for whether the student feels cared for.

Although Noddings is the foremost scholar of a relational view of caring, there are a number of other scholars who share this conception. Unsurprisingly, most of the writings that consider caring as a relational act take the student teacher relationship as their focus. For example, Victor Battistich and his colleagues found that caring classrooms are associated with better attitudes, higher motivation and better behavior for students (and, to a lesser extent, to better academic outcomes) (Battistich et al, 1995; Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997). Teacher practices including warmth, promotion of cooperation, elicitation of discussion, emphasis on prosocial values, and low use of extrinsic control are found to be associated with greater student academic engagement, influence, and positive interpersonal behavior (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997, p. 148).

Other scholars focus still further on teacher behaviors that are viewed by students as caring and uncaring (Teven, 1998; Teven & Gorham, 2001). These scholars find that

students' perceptions of teacher caring are highly related to teachers acting in response to students' stated and implied needs, and also that students' perceptions were shaped more by task-oriented activities than general demeanor.

Teacher attentiveness and responsiveness is a theme throughout the relational literature on caring (Ancess, 2000; Cassidy & Bates, 2005; Demeray & Malecki, 2002; Howard, 2001; Noblit, Rogers, & McCadden, 2001). The support created by teacher caring is the "glue that binds teachers and students together and makes life in classrooms meaningful" (Noblit, Rogers, & McCadden, 2001, p. 680). Ancess (2000) found that in a setting heavily emphasizing academic press, teachers reorganized the day to provide students with additional social and emotional support (p. 608). A number of scholars found that high levels of teacher support (which students interpreted as caring) may be particularly important for students placed at risk (Demeray & Malecki, 2002; Howard, 2001).

A number of scholars also consider the role of principal/school leader caring from a relational perspective. Bass (2009) found that African American women school leaders used an ethic of care to guide their relationships with students, teachers, and community members. More specifically, caring was prioritized over justice for the women she studied. Other scholars who studied administrators driven by an ethic of care found that organizational practices (such as mandatory discipline regardless of context) often stymied caring, and so these administrators were driven more by relationships than other leaders (Marshall, Patterson, Rogers, & Steele, 1996). Roffey (2007) highlights the importance of modeling interpersonal relations for school administrators who are striving

to develop a caring community, and suggests that administrators who relate to teachers in a respectful and inclusive way will foster these same traits in student-teacher relations. Other scholars, though, suggest that administrators are best suited to foment caring by embedding it in school policies and the school environment, while teachers are better positioned to focus on particular relationships (Cassidy & Bates, 2005).

In summary a number of themes characterize relational thinking on educational caring. Noddings (2013) highlights the importance of intention: caring must be intended, and also received. The empirical scholarship highlights the importance of attentiveness and responsiveness- teachers that care for students are able to perceive their needs and respond to them. Finally, there is a general notion that caring involves support in meeting needs: it offers a real "boost" to students (or adults) that need it.

Caring and complexity: The role of culture.

Noddings (1984) suggests that the family is an ideal model for educational caring, but other scholars have suggested that this a naïve ideal to advance: not all families, and not all people, give and experience care in the same way. Thompson (1998) advances a well articulated critique of this position.

Thompson (1998) focuses first on the ways that families are quite different from one another before turning to the educational implications of these differences. Thompson argues that "[i]nsofar as colorblind caring ignores cultural and political issues that are vital in the lives of students, it insists upon an interpretation of experience—and of caring—that is likely to be alien to many students of color" (p. 542). She examines the

concept of caring from a Black feminist perspective through four themes that highlight the distinctions between colorblind White middle-class conceptions of caring and a Black feminist conception of caring.

The first two themes deal with the ways that black women and families have had their choices constrained by slavery, systemic racism, and poverty. The agency afforded to middle class white women to construct homes that can shelter children and maintain their innocence has often been unavailable to African American women. Moreover, African American women have been faced with an imperative to prepare their children for a world in which they will face oppression and discrimination. The meaningfully constrained choices available to many African American mothers, and the decisions they must often make between working for pay to survive and providing childcare reveal that the idealized ethic of care portrayed in Noddings' work and others oversimplifies how many families conceive of care.

Thompson critiques Noddings' model from the perspective of family differences, but her main interest is in articulating the ways the cultural differences impact educational caring. Thompson argues that for teachers to practice authentic educational caring for African American students, they must know their students, help them develop anti-racist strategies for survival, become attuned to multiple cultural narratives, and adopt an attitude of inquiry and openness to change as their understanding of their students' experiences becomes richer (Thompson, 1998, pp. 540-541). Importantly, Thompson is not suggesting that the family provides no guidance for would-be caregivers in school. Rather, she is suggesting that not all families are the same, and that the way

that different families and students experience the world has implications for educational caregiving: the "neutral" white middle-class conception of family care is insufficient. In part, the work of Thompson and others is a critique of the ways that caring is enacted in schools. These scholars argue that naïve versions of caring ignore the degree to which caring in complex social situations necessarily become routine practices. As Hoffman (2009) forcefully states,

> [T]he caring community, when translated into practice, becomes a discourse about activities and behaviors teachers get children to engage in… What is essentially happening is that when it comes to describing and recommending actual practices of classroom management, the language of caring ideals often devolves to a discourse about control, rules, contracts, choices, activities, and organizational structures. In effect, substance is replaced by structure; feeling is replaced by form. Most tellingly, caring and community are conceptualized as things teachers teach children to do by getting them to behave in appropriate ways… Caring and community become lessons taught by teachers to children rather than deeply felt shared emotions embedded in the human relationships of the classroom (p. 545).

The complexities of race as well as the complexities of diverse groups have been explored in the field by a number of critical scholars in addition to Thompson. For example, Antrop-González and De Jesús explore two successful, small community-based Latino high schools (2006). The authors advance a theory of *critical care*, which focuses on a combination of high academic expectations for students, high-quality relationships between students and school staff, and especially on privileging "the funds of knowledge

that students and their respective communities bring to school" (p. 409). The authors suggest that the caring actions of teachers at the high schools they study are received as caring in large part because they are based in an accurate understanding of student experience outside of school as well as in school, and because they are able to honor student experiences in ways that allow them to simultaneously support students and hold them to high expectations (p. 424). Antrop-González (2006) suggests that establishing this sort of caring relation can create a school that is a sanctuary for students in that it is a space that is safe, but also where their identities are recognized and affirmed. However, every element is critical: in situations where caring is emphasized without high expectations for student achievement, students are likely to feel supported but not necessarily perform better in classes (Rivera-McCutchen, 2012). Antrop-González and De Jesús are highlighting the ways that school serving students placed at risk must ensure that their caring is culturally relevant without sacrificing an emphasis on learning. This understanding of educational caring goes beyond Noddiings' conception because it requires teachers and school staff to attend to particular aspects of their students' lives outside of school: it makes special and more strenuous demands on the *knowledge* and *relational skills* that teachers possess.

Antrop-González and De Jesús (2006) examined incidences of caring, but others, like Valenzuela (1999a; 1999b), examine its absence. Valenzuela explores the Latino/a student experience at Seguin High School, a large public high school in Texas. In particular, she explores the way that uncaring teachers (who themselves often view the students they teach as uncaring) are alienated from school because they do not see their

home identities reflected in the school setting and are viewed as other. Importantly, Valenzuela is articulating a theory of *uncaring,* or of the ways that intended care are not received as care. Because schools are intended to be caring by their nature, uncaring schools have particularly subtractive, deleterious effects on students. In order to find an additive notion of caring, one must look to Bartlett and Garcia (2014), who detail a bilingual high school that supports students' sense of belonging and identification with school, and therefore add to students' social capital.

Rolon-Dow (2005) writes about caring in a similar vein to Valenzuela. Rolon-Dow, writing from a critical race perspective, contrasts the stock narratives of caring (e.g., "I care about students because I give them a good space in my classroom away from their troubled home") with emerging counternarratives (e.g., "those teachers don't live in this neighborhood, and don't know about it."). Rolon-Dow suggests that for teachers to practice critical caring they must "unpack their ideologies of progress, opportunity, and success within our society" (2005, p. 104) while simultaneously becoming "students of the communities where they teach" (p. 105). Duncan-Andrade (2009) closely echoes this sentiment- he argues that the caring of school staff tends to be focused on good students, which often translates in practice to be those students who are most willing to accommodate school policies and practices that disadvantage them. Compliance becomes a prerequisite to being cared for. Like Bartlett and Garcia (2014), Duncan-Andrade sees caring as additive, although his focus is on building resilience. In Duncan-Andrade's view, teachers can only demonstrate authentic caring for students by

acting as anti-oppressive agents who actively confront (and teach their students to confront) the forces that harm them (2009, p. 10).

A number of scholars write about caring and uncaring with the broader institutional environment in mind as a backdrop to the complexity of caring. For example, Balbridge (2014) explores the struggles of workers in an academic after school program to care for students despite pressures to frame students as "broken" in order to secure additional funding (p. 1). Luttrell (2012) seeks to expose the care worlds of elementary school aged boys of color. She argues that, in contrast to discourses that suggest a "crisis" of young boys of color, these boys greatly valued their sense of attachment to caregivers. Luttrell suggests that the pressures of high-stakes testing exacerbate the problematization of young boys of color rather than emphasizing care for vulnerable children (p. 199). Luttrell (2013) explores counter-narratives of caring that implicate neoliberal policies that divest from educational caretaking. These authors go beyond relations between students and school adults to the way that policy contexts shape those relations in ways that limit caring based on student characteristics.

Thompson and other scholars who highlight the way that student cultural differences impact caring and uncaring in schools are writing from a critical perspective. They argue that students whose identities and out of school experiences are not reflected in the white middle-class way of being that often characterizes schools are likely to feel that schools are uncaring places. On the other hand, when teachers are grounded in/knowledgeable about their students and the community their students live in, they are

able to highlight aspects of student identity that increase students' sense of identification with school and belonging to school.

One reason that these scholars are particularly important is that they emphasize the importance of students' out of school lives and relationships in a way that is left untroubled and unexplored by those scholars with a more Noddings-like view of educational caring. Valenzuela (1999) highlights the way that schools are alienating for students because the relationships they have with teachers do not resemble the relationships they have with others in their community. Similarly, Antrop-Gonzalez and de Jesus (2006) argue for the potential of schools where social arrangements in school do closely resemble community social arrangements. One important corollary argument from a Thompsonian view of caring is that teacher' who profess (virtue) caring toward students cannot be said to be genuinely invested in them unless they are interested in their communities as well.

One might say that a Thompsonian conception of school caring actually foregrounds the importance of deep and authentic relationships even further. The basis of their critique is that merely positing that caring must take place in a relationship understates the complexity of forming and maintaining meaningful relationships. One must not merely know a student instrumentally, but also appreciate that student's context and to be efficacious at "negotiating borders" between different definitions of what it means to be cared for (Webb, Wilson, Corbett, & Mordecai, 1993, p. 25). Caring requires knowing students deeply, but also having the professional knowledge to act on students'

behalves in ways that reflect students' lived experiences in school (Duncan-Andrade, 2009, p. 10).

I want to note, finally, that the critique of caring articulated by Thompson and others need not only apply to minoritized students. As Firestone and Louis (1999) have argued, schools are typified by layers of culture and sub-culture, and the sense of not being known or cared for in school is a general anxiety among adolescents. Indeed, there is evidence that many students do not experience schools as caring places, although there is some evidence that the experience is more widespread among minoritized students (Riley, 2013a; Weissbourd & Jones, 2014).

Caring as organizational practice.

While Thompson (1998) and other critique Noddings for inadequate attendance to the complexity of caring relationships, another group of scholars emphasizes the importance of considering the broader context in which caring occurs. Without intending to be trite, school organizations are not families. Joan Tronto (1993; 2010) writes about the particular considerations of caring in an organizational context (though she is not writing about schools in particular).

Tronto focuses on three aspects of organizational caring that are largely taken for granted in considering family care, but need to be considered explicitly in organizational contexts. The first of these aspects is particularity- as Tronto points out, "family care is highly particularistic: each family evolves its own ways of doing certain things, and part of the pleasure in being cared for by someone in one's own family is that the family

member is likely to understand and act to accommodate those peculiarities" (2010, p. 161). In order to foreground this trait of family care in organizational settings, organizations should pay "attention to human activities as particular and admitting of other possible ways of doing them and to diverse humans having diverse preferences about how needs might be met" (p. 162). Failure to do so, argues Tronto, can result in a creeping parochialism wherein adequate care is only given to those whose ways of doing things match well with the caregivers own ways. The second aspect of organizational care that Tronto highlights is purpose. The purpose of a parent caring for a child, or vice versa, is not controversial in our society (2010, p. 161). However, in organizational settings there is often a greater need to continually discuss the ends and purposes of care in order to best meet the needs of care-receivers. In schools, for example, school staff may collaborate on certain behavioral and academic goals for a student who is struggling, and in so doing take into consideration what they know about incidents in the student's life outside of school, and link the student with services the school cannot provide.

Finally, and most important for the present survey, is Tronto's discussion of how politics (power relations) in an organization can shape caring behavior. Families are characterized by power relations, but also by a sense of mutual obligation and interdependence. In caregiving organizations, however, the uneven power relationship between caregivers and care receivers often descends into paternalism: the caregiving individual or group decides what the care receiver needs, and gives it to the care receiver. In Tronto's explanation of organizational caring, expertise *is* a form of power- a teacher (or counselor/social worker) knows what is best for a student because of the teacher's

professional knowledge. Tronto exhorts organizations to create space for an ongoing discussion to critically examine power relationships within the organization in order to maintain high quality caregiving (2010, p. 162)

A number of other scholars complement Tronto's exploration of organizational caring (though not always from within the school walls). People in an organization appear to have an expectation of organizational caring and compassion, and become less attached to organizations that do not meet their expectations even if they do not (or cannot) leave them (Lilius et al, 2008). Thus, just as workers become unmotivated when they perceive themselves to have an unresponsive employer, so do students. Some scholars highlight the importance of organizational narratives related to caring: stories that capture the tenor of caring within an organization and set the tone for future action (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012; Osterman, 2000). The way that people talk about acting and interacting within an organization appears to matter for future action (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012). At the organizational level, caring (or uncaring) consists not just in relationships between individuals and groups of people, but as a social norm for how interactions happen generally.

From a school-specific perspective, a number of scholars highlight the ways that organization context can bolster and impede caring and sense of belonging. For example, a number of scholars point to small class sizes as an organizational policy that promotes caring (Gomez and Ang, 2007; Osterman, 2000). Rauner (2000) suggests that one attribute that exemplifies caring schools is intentionality: these schools offer multiple opportunities for student belonging. Other practices such as tracking and

departmentalization are associated with lower levels of caring (Osterman, 2000). However, there is reason to wonder the extent to which structural attributes of school organizations matter for caring. As Osterman notes, “researchers and reformers are beginning to question the efficacy of structural change alone as a means of school reform because it often has little effect on assumptions that shape the processes and practices of schooling” (2000, p. 359).

What caring does to teachers.

Caring for students is a form of emotional labor (Hargreaves, 1998). Teachers are expected, as a matter of personal professional practice, to exude certain emotions toward students (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 840). This labor can have both positive and negative impacts- at some times it can demand that teachers subordinate their authentic emotions in order to perform a role, while at others the reciprocation of caring can have significant psychological benefits. As Hargreaves points out, “The concept of emotional labor puts care into context. It takes care beyond being a personal choice, or moral imperative to an act of work that can be supported, made difficult or turned against the person exercising it, (through stress and extreme self-sacrifice) depending on the context in which the work is performed” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 840).

Several other scholars have considered teacher caring as a form of emotional labor. For example, Goldstein and Lake (2000) explored the ways that preservice elementary school teachers inculcated (and failed to inculcate) a sense of caring teaching practice. O’Connor (2006) documents the ways that teachers are expected to perform

caring as a professional practice even as this professional expectation is largely absent from policy discourse about the teaching profession. The work of Michalinos Zembylas (2003; 2006) is particularly relevant to the present study. Zembylas (2006) finds that teacher efforts to care for students can lead to teachers feeling guilty and sad (when they fail to help students succeed), and that managing these negative emotions took a psychological toll.

Zembylas (2003) took a poststructural approach to the role of emotions in teacher identity. Specifically, he suggests that teacher identity is a political process- teachers are heavily influenced by the organizational and social environment in which their teaching occurs. As Zembylas puts it, "a poststructuralist view opens up a space between self-consciousness, and the interrogation of the discursive and affective conditions of a claim to identity (Bhaba, 1987). Identity is formed in this shifting space where narratives of subjectivity meet the narratives of culture" (p. 221). In schools, emotional rules permit and encourage some emotions in teachers, while proscribing others. The construction of these emotional rules is fundamentally a political process. Zembylas suggests that the discourses within schools attempt to reduce teacher identity to teacher *roles*, but that roles do not constitute identity- identity deals with *investments.* Zembylas' epistemological stance is one of advocacy- he believes that teachers should transgress performative norms of teaching in ways that give me credence to their authentic emotions (p. 227; see also Ball, 2003). Teachers are deeply impacted by their own efforts to care, in both positive and negative ways. The emotional labor of caring is done in ways shaped by the political and organizational context.

A particular concern in recent scholarly works is how teachers talk about students, their families, and their communities (see, e.g., Pollock 2005). Pollock (2016) explores how every day interactions can both promote and undermine equity in schools, as students internalize messages that teachers and other school adults signal to them. The text and subtext of teachers' messages to students is undoubtedly at the center of teacher efforts to care for and about students, and the way teachers talk about students to one another is another important indicator of teacher mindsets, but mindsets, messages and actions are also shaped by these interactions among adult peers.

The enactment of caring by school adults also relates to a number of other emotions, and, especially, emotions that have a cognitive component. For example, teachers' beliefs about students impact their confidence in students' abilities, and thus shape their actions. Intriguingly, confidence is often an emotion identified as contingent on one's perception of one's own power: if one feels more powerful, one is also more confident (Turner & Stets, 2006). Confidence is a feeling that depends, in part, on a rational assessment of the situations. Empathy, in some ways, works in reverse: it is an emotional response that informs one's cognitive understanding and response to a situation. Turner and Stets (2005) emphasize that empathy is not always an emotion per se, but a "mechanism or meta-emotion that promotes strong social bonds or… produces deeper intersubjectivity" (p. 109). The way teachers, in their efforts to care for students, are enmeshed in a broader constellation of emotional states impacts how they interpret student actions, and how likely they are to use certain forms of power and influence in their work with students.

Summary.

As the preceding sections imply, the organizational conception of caring is the least developed of the three schools of thought. Although there is some research into the structures, policies and practices that distinguish caring organizations, the relational view of educational caring and the critique of this view that problematizes the way students from diverse racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds experience caring in school are more fully developed. Understanding more fully how organizational practices shape students' disposition toward school is important to a well-developed theory of how caring "works" in school.

This review of the literature on caring is not exhaustive. Rather, it aims to depict in broad strokes the ways that scholars have depicted caring in school. One group of scholars foregrounds the importance of authentic and sustained relationships for students to feel cared for. Another group of scholars surfaces the importance of knowledge about students' lives and communities in order to negotiate borders between different notions of what it means to be cared for. A third group of scholars attends to the important ways that organizational context influences how caring happens in schools. The intersections between caring and power will be considered directly later, but it is important to examine power in school settings on its own first.

Power in Educational Settings

As with caring, there is no widely accepted theory of power and how power operates in schools. Indeed, there is wide variation in the way that scholars writing from different paradigmatic positions use the concept of power to explain social phenomena. Considerations of power in schools are certainly not new. Waller (1932) turns to power immediately following the introduction of *The Sociology of Teaching.* In *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change,* Seymour Sarason (1971) highlights the way that power structures in schools and school systems can reinforce the existing school culture and buffer the school from change. He notes in a later work:

> Schools and school systems are political organizations in which power is an organizing feature. Ignore [power] relationships, leave unexamined their rationale, and the existing system will defeat efforts at reform. This will happen not because there is a grand conspiracy or because of mulish stubbornness in resisting change or because educators are uniquely unimaginative or uncreative (which they are not) but rather because recognizing and trying to change power relationships, especially in complicated, traditional institutions, is among the most complex tasks human beings can undertake (Sarason, 1990, p. 7).

Power is clearly an organizing feature of school organizations.

Attempting to reconcile the many competing conceptualizations lies far beyond the scope of this paper; the following review will explore the ways that a number of scholars have thought about power both at a macro-level and in school settings. I will briefly consider five categories of theories about power: (1) macro-level critical theories of power, (2) notions of power as democratic organizing, (3) power as a force in *organizations*, (4) power as micropolitical interactions (mostly among school adults), and (5) scholars who consider how students act and react in power relations.

Critical power and the problem of agency: Foucault, Bourdieu, and Giroux.

Foucault argued that power, in combination with knowledge (as produced by discourse) is a means of social regulation or control (Hall, 2001). Specifically, Foucault identified mental asylums, medical clinics, and prisons as places where power is employed in ways legitimized by knowledge as a means of control (1977, p. 58). In Foucault's understanding, modernity is characterized by a growing need and ability to control bodies to provide social service. Applied to schools, this interpretation legitimates certain uses of power by school staff by situating them within social discourse about schools and students (1977, p. 67). Foucault is the most determinist of the critical scholars reviewed here: historically-produced discourse inhabits and acts through the bodies of virtually everyone in society, and leaves little room for agency outside of discourse (Foucault 1980; 1982).

Bourdieu (1977) takes a similar approach to theorizing about power, although he does leave somewhat more room for agency. He argues that individuals develop a *habitus* (set of dispositions) based on their experiences, and that these experiences tend to be structured in a way that fosters social reproduction and acceptance of the current social order. Bourdieu's central point is that one's *habitus* has substantial power to shape one's outcomes. (1977, p. 79, see also Anyon, 1980). However, the field in which agents operate is not wholly deterministic: there is a tendency toward reproduction, but individuals do have agency (Bourdieu, 1977).

Applications of Bourdieu in education have tended to emphasize the constraints of habitus rather than the potential for agency in developing or changing habitus. Lareau

(2003), for example, applied Bourdieu's work to parenting approach for middle class white families and poor and working class African American families, and found that both parenting strategies make sense, though the middle class parenting strategy is more generative of capital in institutional settings (schools, etc.). Bourdieu (1986) also foregrounds the importance of social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital in power relationships; critical caring scholars would observe that only certain forms of capital are seen as having worth in schools (Valenzuela, 1999; Antrop Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006).

Giroux (1997; 2006) offers the most room for individual agency, suggesting that schools should become sites of radical democracy. In fact, Giroux is harshly critical of other scholars who *do* describe social reproduction as deterministic. Instead, Giroux suggests that power is best understood as a set of concrete practices that produce social forms through which experience is constructed (1997, p. 120). Discourse is not monolithic, rather, *discourses* are multiple and sites for contest and struggle. Giroux advocates strongly for an increasing politicization of schools, suggesting that schools reflect conflicts that play out in wider society and particularly that re-politicizing cultural politics offers an avenue for liberatory pedagogy. Fundamentally, Giroux suggests that students (and to a lesser extent teachers) should strive for increased power in order combat discourses focusing on measurement, privatization, or mere reproduction. Giroux's writings, however, are more theoretical than empirical. He does not document the sustained existence of emancipator schooling.

Although these critical models of power differ in the degree to which they offer individual agency, they all stress the extent to which power (in terms of discourse or

habituation) shapes social interaction. In schools, these theories help to explain the ways in which broader social trends and expectations shape and mediate the behavior (and interactions) of students and staff.

Power and democratic organizing.

John Dewey (1916; 2013) takes a more pragmatic approach to power. Dewey begins with the notion that education should meaningfully mimic life. The purpose of the school is to prepare children who are ready to be productive adults in a democratic society. In one sense, Dewey embraces the reproductive aspect of school: he hopes that schools will be effective at passing knowledge from one generation to the next in an increasingly complex society (1916, p. 5). More importantly though, Dewey believes that education is central to the democratic process (1916, p. 91). Dewey's view is that democracy goes beyond a form of government to a form of "associated living" and that the survival of this association depends on unlocking the potential of as wide as possible a selection of society. Dewey's argument, in broad strokes, is that the power afforded by knowledge should be diffused as widely as possible.

Dewey takes the notion of control seriously, or, he is serious about the importance of those in power thoughtfully exerting their control to educative purposes (1916, p. 29). He notes that when exerting influence in a particular way, one must attend not merely to the one-off consequences of the interaction, but to the longer-term implications as well (p. 30). Nonetheless, Dewey acknowledges the importance of careful guidance by adults to educate students for democracy.

Jeannie Oakes offers a present-day application of Dewey's thought (though it is worth noting that Oakes is more critical than Dewey himself). Oakes and Rogers (2003) describe their efforts at social movement activism for equity. Noting the inequality that has persisted since Brown v. Board, the authors suggest that technical solutions to school reform and improvement are misguided because they do not the cultural and ideological underpinnings of the existing system. They find in Dewey's work advocacy for a revitalized public sphere founded on sustained and meaningful partnerships between researchers and reformers. The authors argue that social design experiments are a fruitful way for actors to convert knowledge into social capital- that is, to organize for change and exert power.

In a later work, the authors elaborate on this understanding of power in education. In this work, Oakes and Rogers foreground a principle they call "Learning Power" (2007, p. 202). This concept encompasses three aspects of the role of power in education. First, learning *about* power- teaching students how to recognize who has power. Second, the power *of* learning- how learning can be used to effect social change. Finally, learning *to be* powerful- learning how to organize and connect with others to pursue political and policy goals.

For Dewey and his later interpreters, power in education is about the maintenance of a robust democracy. An egalitarian society is essential to this vision, and widespread educational opportunity is crucial to allow members of society to reach their potential as civic contributors. Oakes and Rogers envision a greater role for social movement within schools in order to achieve Dewey's aims. This notion of power offers much more room

for agency than that of Bourdieu or Foucault. It is also rooted in collaboration- teachers, students, researchers, and community members work together to generate social capital and pursue equity.

Power in organizations.

From the perspective of organizational politics, power is the ability to bring about desired outcomes (Pfeffer, 1981, p. 3). This conception of power has several implications at the school level. From a resource dependence perspective, the school's need for support from outside organizations can shape school interactions (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Similarly, organizational politics can play a role in policy implementation (Malen, 2006). Finally, power as organizational politics is also useful in explaining whose interpretation of events is ultimately adopted as an operating schema (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). These perspectives provide valuable insight into why organizational actors act and react in the ways they do.

Unlike the critical scholars surveyed above, organizational scholars take a more neutral view of power. Where Foucault suggests that social power operates in a way that severely curtails agency, organizational scholars tend to view the use of power as basically agent-based: people use their power to achieve their desired aims (Pfeffer, 1981). So, while critical notions of power use tend to be associated with oppression, power in organizations explains positive and effective organizational behavior as well as organizational failures.

Micropolitics: Power relations between peers.

The literature on micropolitics is generally used to explore relationships between school adults. Ball (1987) identifies the school as a place characterized by conflict, and notes that those who wish to control the affairs of the school are "significantly concerned with domination… domination is intended to achieve and maintain particular definitions of the school over and against alternative, assertive definitions. The process which links these two basic facets of organizational life – conflict and domination – is *micro-politics*" (p. 278).

Although there is widespread agreement with Ball's general articulation of competing imperatives that characterize political conflict in the school, Blase (1991) provides a definition of micropolitics that underscores that political actions in school can be both formal and informal, and results from differences between groups that result in one or more groups exerting power to change the situation (p. 11). This definition of micropolitics illustrates the breadth of the concept as a mechanism for exploring political contests in schools and educational organizations. Micropolitical analysis is focused on, "understanding the interweaving of personal lives with organizational and social structures… The constraining power of the organization that people confront daily is real. It is embedded in the actions of others with all their ambiguities and complexities" (Ball, 1987, p. 279). Ball is arguing that micropolitics is a way to enliven the real experiences of school actors in a way that abstract and functionalist organizational theories "obscure" (Ball, 1987, p. 279).

Micropolitics has been used as a frame to analyze the actions of teachers, students, and school leaders. The following paragraphs will examine past work in each

area. Ball (1987) is most interested in the way micropolitical concerns shape the actions of the headteacher in British schools. Ball diagrams the ways that headteachers use authority, appointments, relationships and committees to achieve political ends within the school, and ways that teachers cooperate and resist headmasters in these efforts. Ball concludes by noting that the picture of school politics he presents is not without alternative: a more democratic version of school organization is also possible. Anderson (1991), another critical scholar, is even more openly normative in his analysis of the way school leaders use ideological control as a method of achieving their political agendas. Anderson exhorts school leaders to refocus their attention on democratic empowerment, rather than functionalist control (1991, p. 137). Blase and Blase (1996) suggest that school leaders who have a facilitative (power-with) rather than conflictual/controlling (power-over) micropolitical orientation are highly effective at raising teachers' sense of empowerment. Blase and Blase identify principals' caring actions toward teachers as particularly important to this sense of empowerment.

Micropolitical analyses of teachers have focused on teacher socialization and collaboration. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a, 2002b) identified beginning teachers' micropolitical strategies in five categories: self-interests, material interests, organizational interests, cultural-ideological interests, and social-professional interests. The authors conclude that developing micropolitical literacy (the ability to understand and act in the political context of the school) is important to teacher satisfaction and persistence. Kelchtermans (2005) elaborates on the role of politics in the lives of teachers by noting that teaching is emotional labor, and that a teacher's sense of self-understanding is

intimately bound up in a teacher's conception of what constitutes a good education. Consequently, "[r]eform agendas that impose different normative beliefs may not only trigger intense feelings, but also elicit micropolitical actions of resistance or proactive attempts to influence and change one's working conditions" (2005, p. 995). Curry and her co-authors (2006) also explore how early career teachers develop micropolitical literacy in the context of their professional inquiry groups with other teachers.

Hargreaves (1991) explores the micropolitics of teacher collaboration. He found that in the school where collaboration was mandatory, what developed was "contrived collegiality," a form of collaboration centered on implementation and predictability (as opposed to sometimes unpredictable development and growth). Hargreaves argues that this the way teacher collaboration developed in this school is reflective of a micropolitical arena wherein the empowerment of teachers is limited to implementation of centrally planned educational innovations. Achinstein (2002) focuses on the micropolitical conflicts within teacher collaborative groups. Using data from a comparative case study of two urban middle schools Achinstein finds that when teachers undertake collaboration in order to build their school community, conflict often ensues. However, Achinstein finds that this conflict is often constitutive of the community in and of itself, and the manner in which conflict is managed can provide valuable opportunities for organizational learning.

Finally, some scholars have also undertaken micropolitical analysis of students and student voice, although this is rare. These analyses often focus on the politics of the student-teacher relationship. Blase (1991b) finds that many teachers are guided, at least in

part, by political concerns. For example, Blase found that teachers developed proactive persuasive political tactics to establish relationships with students that maintained an "appropriate social and psychological distance" (p. 190). On the other hand, teachers developed protective micropolitical strategies to insulate themselves from criticism from students and parents. Importantly, Blase found that proactive strategies employed by teachers was based on teacher perceptions of student needs, while protective strategies were largely a response to teachers' sense of their own vulnerability (p. 200). Diamond, Randolph and Spillane (2004) observe that teacher expectations of low-income African American students are lower because organizational habitus ultimately impacts teacher classroom level micropolitical interactions with students (p. 94).

Other micropolitical analyses of students focus on student struggle and resistance. Anderson and Herr (1994) focus on the experience of students of color at a preparatory school. They find that the students often feel silenced by the school organization, resulting in the privatizing of student's struggles and the maintenance of organizational color-blindness and a mythology of equal opportunity (p. 66). The students of color at this school are made to choose between a version of their lives validated by the organizational discourse, and a version of their lives that the organizational discourse delegitimizes. Spaulding (2000) examines what happens when students employ micropolitical strategies of resistance (both passive and active). Spaulding observes that frequent, concerted use of active restistance strategies by students can erode teachers' sense of their own ability and lead to fatigue (p. 30).

Power and students: Negotiation, resistance, and consent.

There are a number of perspectives on the way power impacts relations between teachers and students. This sub-section is by no means an exhaustive appraisal of these views. Rather, I highlight five important perspectives that constitute a good sampling of viewpoints.

Waller (1932) characterizes political relations in the school as essentially autocratic. At bottom, he argues, "schools are organized on the authority principle, with power vested in the superintendent and radiating from him down" (p. 9). Teachers are responsible for instructing students, who would learn much less without the teacher's aid. Because teachers are responsible to the broader community for student learning, the teacher is necessarily dominant to ensure that students do master their subjects. However, relations between adults in the building also impact relations between the students. In cases where teachers at a school get along well, teachers *and* students are afforded a higher degree of power vis-à-vis the school leader. On the other hand, where relations are strained, all interactions tend to be more authority driven.

Waller posits that self-government in schools is "rarely real" (p. 9). Rather, in schools where teachers do have significant power, students may garner a small amount of power in formal capacities that are closely supervised by teachers. Nonetheless, Waller notes that schools are in a constant state of "perilous equilibrium" (p. 10). Multiple stakeholders continually threaten to upset this equilibrium, including parents, students, and other teachers. In fact, as Waller notes, teachers and administrators are the "actual" authority, but not the "ultimate" authority. In the final equation, government of students

rests “upon the consent, mostly silent, of the governed” (p. 12). In Waller’s view schools depend on authority. In some cases power may be vested mostly in the school’s administrator, and at other times it may be shared teachers, but it is rarely ever meaningfully shared with students. This is in part because schools are perilous places wracked by competing interests: without a firm hand they are liable to spin out of control.

Ogbu (1982; 1990) presents a theory that seeks to explain student resistance to learning. Specifically, Ogbu suggests that low academic achievement among castelike minorities results from their response to domination by white Americans and an active resistance to this dominant culture. The important aspect of these differences, Ogbu suggests, is that they are secondary rather than primary differences (1982, p. 303). That is, parts of castelike minority culture are defined in opposition to white culture, and not independently of it. Put differently, the way that castelike minorities do things becomes an important component of group identity (1990, p. 48). Ogbu (1990) contrasts castelike minorities, who have internalized a history of oppression, with immigrant minorities, who have often moved because they hope for better economic circumstances and have “folk theories of getting ahead” (p. 49). In Ogbu’s view, student resistance to schooling by castelike minorities is a natural response to their belief that schools both threaten important aspects of their group identity and cannot provide them with a good education due to their status.

Erickson (1987) criticizes Ogbu’s argument about schooling as both overly deterministic and lacking a sufficient empirical base. Erickson suggests that cultural and sociolinguistic differences between teachers and students in Elementary school contribute

to a growing mistrust between students as teachers highlight as "deficits" ways of speaking and acting that students take as natural. Erickson points out that when one talks about student resistance to learning, one really means the learning that is intended by teachers and school staff: students are learning constantly (p. 344). However, learning what is being taught is a form of political assent by students- assent to the authority of the school that requires a trust relationship and an underlying belief in the legitimacy of the school (p. 345). Absent this trust, students will not bond with school adults. Faced with what they perceive as repeated challenges to their identity, students "refuse to accept that negative identity" and "work at failure" (pp. 350-351). Erickson's main interest is in showing greater room for agency than Ogbu's explanation allows: he suggests that students become alienated through a series of interactions that stigmatize their identity. School adults and responsible for these practices and could choose more culturally relevant ways of teaching.

The authors of *The Shopping Mall High School* use the concept of "treaties" to explain power relations between teachers and students (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985). Treaties are negotiated between teachers and students in order to maintain a high level of social accord. As the authors note, "the important point is that banging heads every day is the exception rather than the rule. Conflict is rarely the way that classroom participants come to terms with each other" (p. 67). Instead, parties most often find it advantageous to coexist peacefully by striking a deal.

Treaties can be formal (official classroom rules) but they are more often informal (norms and unspoken expectations of conduct). The content of treaties varies widely, but

classes must negotiate the level of engagement in learning, the extent to which class can encumber students' time, the tenor of student-teacher relationships, and the intensity with which the class will be approached. Within these broad categories open for negotiation, a wide variety of deals are available. For example, some teachers use personal relationships with students to engage students more deeply in the subject matter, while other teachers use relationships to avoid the subject matter (p. 106).

The authors suggest that for both students and teachers, treaties often represent a way to do the minimum acceptable amount of work possible (p. 108). The dominating motivation, particularly for teachers, is to avoid conflict and limit student resistance. However, teachers with more power (as perceived by students) *are* in a position to demand more from students (p. 110). On the other hand, teachers also negotiate treaties because of sympathy for the students they teach, as those students navigate the pressures of adolescence. Power, in *The Shopping Mall High School*, is seen in the way that classrooms function: the deals that are struck are evidence of the relative power of teachers and students. Largely absent from this text is commentary on the way that adult relationships influence student relationships in school: classrooms are islands unto themselves.

McLaren (1986) takes a performative view of schooling. In *Schooling as a Ritual Performance,* students take on in-school identities that are scripted for them. Power is acting on these students in that they are participating in a ritual that negates their own agency (p. 83). Through participation in this ritual, students are being made into "Workers" and "Catholics". Students also resist, particularly in ways that reassert their

out of school identities into their school lives. In McLaren's critical ethnography, the rituals that constitute a school day are a powerful force for constraining student behavior and defining the boundaries of acceptable in school action. Rituals possess a power unto themselves, irrespective of who implements them. McLaren highlights laughter as a particularly powerful form of resistance (p. 164). Students laughing at a teacher fundamentally erodes the teacher's power by challenging the teacher's "self-typification as leader" (p. 165). Laughter is a medium for students to assert collective (rather than individual) existence: it magnifies student power.

The five notions of how power relations play out between students and school adults are intended to sensitize the reader to a variety of conceptions, not to be an exhaustive survey. Nonetheless, these ways of thinking about power in relations between students and school adults suggest that negotiation, resistance, and consent are at work, to varying degrees, in all schools. I turn now to the few articles that do address caring and power in schools directly.

Both Sides Now: Caring and Power in Schools

There is a small extant literature that considers power and caring in schools directly. Valenzuela (1999a; 1999b) considers the way that teachers and students become alienated from each other. Valenzuela found that students do not feel that teachers care for them authentically- rather, teachers exert positional power in order to push students to participate in school. Valenzuela argues that students do not feel supported by teachers, and do not see their language and culture represented in schools- consequently, they

disengage from school. Teachers, on the other hand, come to believe that students do not care about school because they stop doing schoolwork. This changes teachers' disposition toward students, leading to further disengagement and disaffection (1999a, p. 41, 261).

Valenzuela's arguments do offer insight into the ways that the intersection of power and caring for students can lead to disaffection. Certainly the students in Valenzuela's study did not feel cared for. However, Valenzuela cannot be said to have advanced a complete argument for the intersection between caring and power in schools for two reasons. First, her theory explains a process of disaffection, but it doesn't account for variation in outcomes: not every Mexican-American student becomes disaffected (see Conchas, 2001). Second, Valenzuela mostly details the *effects* of uncaring- the process of disengagement as a result of not feeling cared for. A fuller account needs to attend to the factors underlying the way school adults care for students: what are the organizational (and personal) factors that influence adult interactions and expectations of students?

A number of other scholars have studied the links between caring and power as well, though most of these works tend to consider individual relationships or classrooms rather than the school as a whole. McLaughlin (1991) considers the plight of new teachers who must simultaneously find ways to care for students while establishing and maintaining authority within the classroom. He performed an in-depth study of the way a single student teacher thought about and enacted caring and controlling in her classroom. McLaughlin describes the way this student teacher struggled to engage in engaging discussions students (caring for them by knowing and incorporating their interests) while also maintaining control of the class (p. 189). McLaughlin likewise highlights the

teachers' efforts to develop authentic caring relationships with students while also maintaining a sense of fairness and equality in the classroom.

Noblit (1993) highlights the positive uses of power in a classroom. In a piece that thoroughly incorporates the author's own subjectivities and self-reflection, Noblit explores the way that a female African American teacher used power to *empower* her students. He notes, "I was well educated in the literature of power, yet I could not distinguish between power and oppression: they were one and the same" (p. 34). To the teacher in Noblit's study, power was a form of moral authority: a way of acting on behalf of others that affirms their own worth. While Noblit's study focused on an elementary teacher, Alder (2002) explores caring from the perspective of students in a middle school classroom. These students identified caring teachers as those who developed authentic relationships, offered personalized leadership that met the needs of individual student, and helped students to truly understand course content in a fun and engaging way (pp. 259-260). In addition, though, these students saw as caring those teachers who maintained control over their classes and removed barriers to learning in the form of disruptive students.

Each of the three above studies shed important insight into the interaction of caring and power as it plays out in individual classrooms. Sernak (1998) explores the balance of caring and power from the perspective of school leadership. Like Noblit (1993), Sernak began the project with the view that power and caring were inherent at odds: power is synonymous with oppressing, but care is synonymous with nurturing. By the end, however, she finds that for school leaders, power is necessary to be caring:

caring "is not separate from power, but is an integral part of it" (p. 157). The implications of these studies will be discussed in more depth below.

The Middle School Years

Because the proposed site of this study is a pair of middle schools, it is important to briefly survey the literature on Middle Schools and the needs of early adolescents for school support. Early adolescence is widely recognized as an important transitional stage where young adults begin to assert their independence, but still rely on adults for support (National Middle School Association, 2003). In fact, many scholars suggest that this developmental stage is so distinct from either childhood or late adolescence that teachers in middle schools need to be specially trained to meet the needs of this age group (Jackson & Davis, 2000). As one study puts it there are, "twin horns of the adolescent dilemma – the need for independence and the need for care" (Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan, 1996, p. 54). Despite this, much of the literature on caring in schools tends to focus on either high schools (e.g., Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006; Rivera-McCutchen, 2012; Rolon-Dow, 2005; Valenzuela 1999a) or elementary schools (e.g., Battistich et al, 1995; Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997; Lutrell, 2012; Lutrell, 2013; Noblit, 1993). Although the middle grades have not been ignored altogether, they are less studied than younger and older students. What follows is a short review of the literature on caring, support, engagement and motivation in middle schools with an emphasis on how support fits into the developmental needs of early adolescent students.

For students placed at risk, a process of disengagement in school often starts in the middle grades (Balfanz, Herzog, & MacIver, 2007; Rumburger, 1995). Behavior and attendance patterns among sixth grade students can be used to predict 60% of students who will drop out of high school (Balfanz, Herzog, & MacIver, 2007). A feeling among students of being supported and cared for by teachers is significant predictor of school persistence (Balfanz, Herzog, & MacIver, 2007, p. 9).

A number of scholars have studied engagement and motivation during the middle school years directly. Marks (2000) studied patterns of engagement in restructuring schools and compared elementary, middle, and high schools. Use of disciplinary sanctions against students negatively impacted middle school engagement more than in high school or elementary school (p. 168). While the importance of school environment is relatively constant across grades, the importance of a supportive classroom environment for engagement appears to increase as students progress in school, a particularly interesting finding given that middle school marks the first time that most students transition independently between classes (p. 170). Other research has found that teacher support when combined with a classroom environment that encourages social and collaborative learning is particularly effective at boosting motivation and engagement among middle school students, while emphasizing performance goals and comparing student performance to peer-performance diminishes motivation and engagement (Ryan & Patrick, 2001).

Wentzel (1997) investigated how caring influences motivation for middle school students. She found that for middle school students, perceived caring from teachers had a

positive effect on student motivation even when controlling for past motivation, psychological distress, and beliefs about personal control (p. 411). Students characterized caring teachers as those who especially possess four qualities: evidence that they cared *about* teaching, democratic interactions in terms of communication and equitable treatment, having individualized expectations of students based on knowledge of students as learners and people, and nurturance.

Seventh and eighth grade appear to be the school years when discipline, regimentation, and impersonality are most prominent in students' school careers, at precisely the time when students need a careful balance of personal care and room to be independent (Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan, 1996). It is little wonder that the engagement and academic success of middle school students is significantly impacted by the presence of caring school adults (Marks, 2000; Wentzel, 1997). Nor is it surprising that school dispositions established during formative middle school years tend to persist (Balfanz, Herzog, & MacIver, 2007). In the only study I've found that directly considers the intersection of caring and power in the middle school classroom, Alder (2002) suggests that students believe a caring teacher is one who removes other disruptive students from the learning environment and thus honors students' need to be safe, but students simultaneous expect teachers to engage in reciprocal dialogue as "equal moral agents" (p. 263). Without meaning to sound facile, middle school teachers must engage in a delicate balancing act that requires them to be a moral authority to maintain an orderly learning environment while simultaneously acknowledging the burgeoning independence the students they teach. The way that school adults navigate this balance, and the way that

school climate and organizational attributes shape interactions between adults and students in middle schools is a fertile ground for further study.

In the discussion that follows, I highlight some key themes from the literatures on caring, power, and the intersection of caring and power with an eye to highlighting areas that may prove fruitful topics of future research. I conclude with a set of potential research questions.

Summary and Research Questions

There is no widely accepted theory of education caring, or of power, let alone of the two together. Most scholars think about caring as relational practice, or a way of being in a relationship, but there is considerable variance the relative importance that scholars ascribe to the cultural and contextual undercurrents of that relationship, or the organizational environment that the relationship takes place in. There is even less consensus in the literature on power, and consideration of the intersection between caring and power in schools is largely untrodden ground.

In this section I will address three issues. First, I highlight themes that emerged from the literatures on caring and power. Second, I begin to theorize how caring and power may be related at multiple levels of practice in schools, and particularly organization-wide, amongst teachers, and between teachers and students. Third, I suggest several particular emphases that may be fruitful directions for future research. I conclude with some concrete research questions.

The following themes emerged across the literature:

- Caring in schools is most often understood as a way of being in a relationship, though there can be many contextual and organizational factors that bear on that relationship.
- By far the most commonly studied aspect of educational caring is the relationships between students and teachers. Some scholars have studied the caring practices of school administrators, but very little work has been done on caring relationships amongst teachers.
- Caring is related to many student outcomes including school engagement, sense of attachment to schools, and indirectly to student academic achievement.
- There are multiple ways to think about power in schools. For some scholars, power acts to reproduce the existing social order. For others, a central purpose of schooling is to learn to exercise one's power in a democracy. For still others, power is benign and simply a means to accomplish one's goals.
- Scholars of micropolitics show that viewing relations between school staff as a political negotiation over the goals and methods of the school is a helpful way to understand what is happening in schools.
- Relationships between students and teachers have also been viewed as negotiations designed to produce treaties (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985), or as resistance movements designed to assert a particular group identity (or reject a negative identity) (Erickson, 1987; McLaren, 1986; Ogbu, 1982). Waller (1932) observed that relations amongst school staff impact the tone of relations between school staff and students.
- Scholars who have considered the intersection of caring and power tend to focus on relationships between students and teachers. Interestingly, these scholars tend to begin their studies with an unfavorable view of how power operates in schools, but conclude with a more positive view (Alder, 2002; Noblit, 1993).

Because there is no pre-existing theory of the intersection of caring and power, one goal of any study that emerges from this review would be theory development. Consequently, it is neither possible nor desirable to develop a fully fledged theoretical framework. Instead, I briefly consider how the existing literatures pertain to caring at multiple levels in school, including organizationally, in relationships between school adults, and in student-teacher relationships.

In terms of organizations, the existing literature on caring has little to say. As noted above, Tronto highlights the importance of organizational actors considering the politics, purposes, and particularity of caring actions. There is skepticism that *structural* attributes of organizations have very much impact on caring at all (Osterman, 2000). Rather, organizational practices appear to be of greater importance (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012). One way that organizations contribute to caring relations among constituents is by creating enabling conditions for caring relations, such as a safe and secure environment for learning, a safe and risk tolerant environment for adults, and an ethos of collaboration and shared responsibility (Louis, Murphy, & Smylie, 2016, pp. 317-318). The potential tensions of use of power are inherent in some of these conditions: they are dilemmas of school organization (Ogawa, Crowson, & Goldring, 1999). The nature and distribution of power in schools shapes these conditions. The literature on power at a macro or organizational level suggests that the mindsets of school staff about students and the nature of schooling influence the general organizational culture in ways that affect caring (see, e.g., Anyon, 1980; Sarason, 1971). Although caring and power clearly intersect at the organizational level, scholars that have studied caring and power in schools tend to largely ignore organizational considerations. Valenzuela (1999a) documents the ways that relationships with teachers alienate students from school, but pays much less attention to the way that organizational orthodoxies influence those student/teacher relationships.

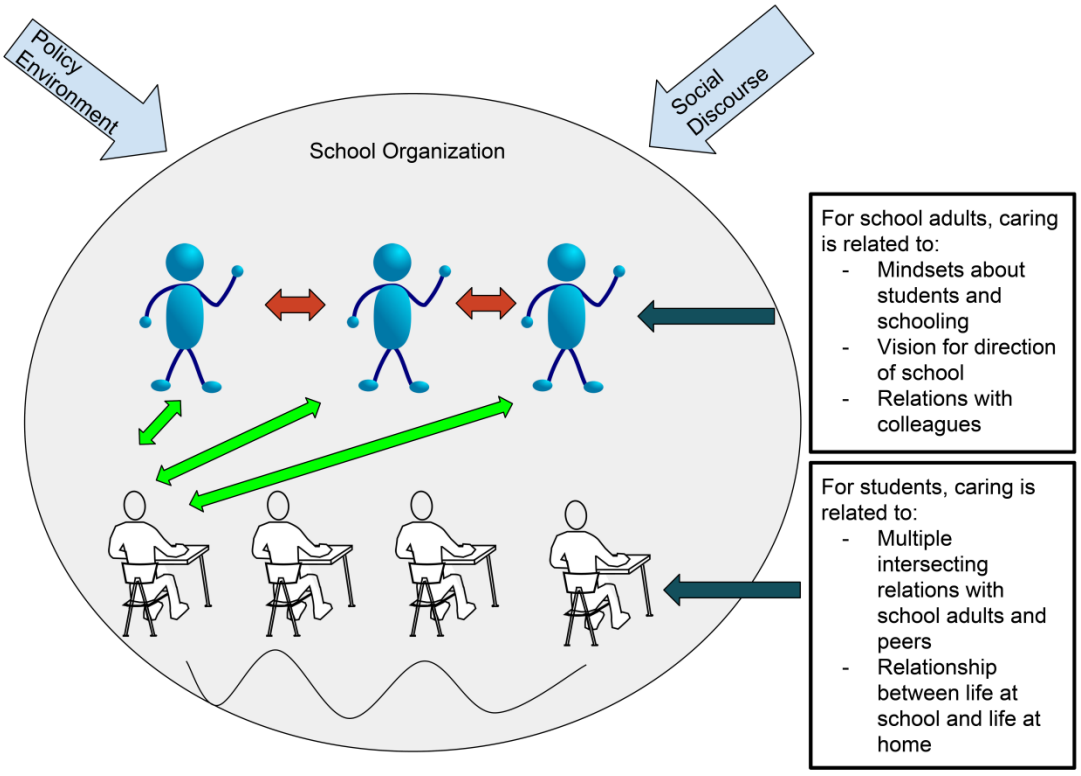
Relationships amongst school staff members affect both organization-level caring practice and student-teacher relationships. Relations between school staff can be

understood as an ongoing competition for power in determining the direction that the school will take (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991). Although there is agreement that good relationships between staff members is associated with more caring for and about students (Noddings, 2013), little work has been done to understand what facilitates these relationships, and especially how differences amongst staff in educational philosophy or the direction of school policy impacts the overall nature of caring in the school. Work outside the realm of education suggests that adults have a basic expectation of caring from their workplace, and that sensemaking narratives that contextualize struggle and disagreement help contribute to caring work environments (Lilius et al, 2008; Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012). There is significant room for additional exploration of the intersection of caring and power in relationships amongst school adults.

Relationships between students and teachers are well explored in the literature on educational caring. Although there is no consensus on how best to arrange these relationships to facilitate caring, a great deal of work has been done both theoretically and empirically. There are also theories of student/teacher power relations that highlight the importance of group identity and resisting challenges to that identity (Erickson, 1987; McLaren, 1986; Ogbu, 1982) as well as negotiation between teachers and students to keep the general peace (Waller, 1932; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985). Most prior work on the intersection of caring and power does not explicitly foreground these theories of power, and instead focuses on how the actions of the teacher are received by students (Alder, 2002; McLaughlin, 1991; Noblit, 1993).

Figure 1, below, summarizes these initial observations about the way that caring and power intersect at the level of school organization, school staff relationships, and student teacher relationships based on the extant literature.

Figure 1: Multiple levels of caring and power relations



As should be clear from the discussion above, there is significant room for additional research into the ways that power relations affect caring in schools. The most glaring area of need is increased understanding of the way that organizational practices and climate, as well as relations amongst school staff, influence the interrelationship between caring and power in schools. As Osterman (2000) notes in her review of research on student sense of belonging in schools, “the least developed area [of research]

deals with those organizational practices and policies that affect the development of students' sense of community in schools" (p. 360).

One particular challenge in studying caring and power in this case is that the easiest way to "see" power in schools is frequently to look for conflict (see Sarason, 1971). However, past studies of caring have indicated that resistance by students or staff members may be more passive, or may take the form of alienation or acquiescence and disengagement (Riley, 2013a; Valenzuela, 1999). Consequently, a study of caring and power from an organizational practice perspective must attend closely not only to overt conflict, but to the way that less powerful constituent both *feel about and react to* actions from more powerful constituents.

There are two related reasons to expect that research on the relationship between power and caring in schools from an organizational practice perspective would be fruitful. The first is practical. A rich phenomenological/philosophical view of caring is of limited practical utility to researchers, policymakers, and school leaders who wish to make schools into more caring places. Although student-teacher relationships are deeply important to students' academic and social success, it is difficult to intercede and change any particular student-teacher relationship. Rather, creating organizational conditions and practices conducive to a high-density of caring relationships is likely to have broad positive effects. Understanding these conditions and practices requires careful attendance to the way power relations play out in schools.

Second, students do not experience school merely in terms of individual relationships. Students are embedded in a dense, interconnected web of relationships at

schools (Felber-Smith, 2015; Mitra, 2008; Murphy, 2016). Each of those relationships contributes to students' sense of schools as caring or uncaring places. Consequently, exploring the intersection of caring and power in schools from the lens of organizational practices and relations between school adults also gives a more *vertical* sense of how the intersection of power and caring plays out in school: it both contextualizes and enriches an understanding of caring student-teacher relationships.

To conclude, I propose three discrete research questions:

1.) *How do school staff members make sense of their need to balance caring and control? When school staff members use their positional or relational power, what are the implications for caring relations in the school? What happens when there are conflicts in caring norms between staff and student, between staff members, and between staff and families? What might the implications of a culturally grounded caring be for power relations in the school?*

2.) *How are school-level decisions with implications for student caring made and sustained? Who is involved in making them? What happens when things don't go as planned?*

3.) What school level structures, beliefs, practices, policies, seem to shape teacher caring?

Research endeavoring to answer these three questions could provide valuable insight into the role power plays in enacting caring at the school level.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Methods

This is qualitative, and is positioned within the grounded theory tradition of inquiry. Grounded theory is motivated by the philosophies of pragmatisim and symbolic interactionism (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Crotty, 1998). In these schools of thought, knowledge is constructed socially, through action and interaction. Truth is not absolute, but it is also not mired in radical relativism- it is instead *provisional* and grounded in usefulness (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 4).

The intent of a grounded theory study is to develop a substantive theory of how situations play out in the real world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 31). Grounded Theory is a particularly good method of investigation for studying process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 32). Although the grounded theory methodology described in section most closely resembles that laid by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Corbin and Strauss (2008), I am also receptive to the more interpretivist approach to grounded theory laid out by Charmaz (2014). As Cresswell (2007) notes, "Charmaz advocates for a social constructivist perspective that includes emphasizing diverse local worlds, multiple realities and the complexities of particular worlds, views and actions…with a focus on theory developed that depends on the researcher's view, learning about the experience within embedded, hidden networks, situations, and relationships, and making visible hierarchies of power, communication, and opportunity" (p 65). For Charmaz (2014), this understanding of grounded theory represents a return to the spirit of Glaser and Strauss's original grounded theory, emphasizing induction, emergence, and open-endedness. Charmaz refers to "constructivist grounded theory" as a response to critiques that

grounded theory had become overly formulaic and positivist, and not responsive enough to the ways that researchers and participants co-construct meaning (2014, pp. 12-13). It is in this spirit that I pursue grounded theory.

This study is also a dual-site case study that requires a cross-case analysis. Because the natural bounds of the study are a pair of middle schools, this study is a case study by definition (Yin, 2012). The main purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between caring and power in schools, with a particular emphasis on how organizational characteristics and relationships between school adults impact students' experiences of caring. Because I am particularly interested in how organizational dynamics impact caring and power, it makes sense to select particular schools as sites for study. As Stake notes, however, "case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of what is to be studied" (2000, p. 435). Although there are methodological imperatives that bear on case study research (see Stake, 2006; Yin, 2012), they do not seem to meaningfully negate the potential for a grounded theory inquiry in the present circumstance. The sections that follow go into much greater detail on the research design. Indeed, case studies have been a means of theory generation for some time (see Eisenhardt, 1989). Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) note that some case study researchers use the term grounded theory simply to refer to theory that is grounded in empirical data, while others use the term "Grounded Theory" to refer to the specific approach constant comparison and theoretical sampling described by Glaser and Strauss. Eisenhardt and Graebner suggest that:

> "[i]t is also helpful to preempt misunderstanding by engaging in systematic data collection and theory development processes that are

> reported with transparent description, particularly regarding how the theory was inducted from the data (e.g., description of cross-case comparison techniques). The key here is to convey the rigor, creativity, and open-mindedness of the research processes while sidestepping confusion and philosophical pitfalls" (2007, p. 30).

Although I intend to closely follow the data collection and analytic techniques suggested by Charmaz (2014) and Corbin and Strauss (2008), my broader guiding principle will be thorough and transparent description of my methodological choices during data collection and analysis. The subsequent sections go into detail on site selection, data collection, and analysis techniques.

Selection and Participants

Because there is no broadly accepted theory of caring and power, and, indeed, one purpose of this study is to begin to develop such a theory, there is likewise no immediately apparent reason to select any particular site. Research from the *Making Caring Common* project at Harvard University has indicated that many students, from a variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds experience school as uncaring (Weissbourd & Jones, 2014). All schools of sufficient size are comprised of multiple layers of culture and sub-culture, and each of these groups (and individuals within them) experience schools differently (Firestone & Louis, 1999), so understanding caring and power requires attention not merely to the contours of a school as a whole, but to the differential group within a school as well. At the same time, there is considerable evidence within the extant literature that students of color or of low socioeconomic status in general, and immigrant students in particular, may be particularly vulnerable to

experiencing school as uncaring or alienating (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999), making this a population of particular importance for understanding the intersection of caring and power in school life.

With this in mind, I elected to use a combination of *typical-case* and *critical-case* sampling (Mertens, 2014). Typical case sampling is somewhat self-explanatory: it involves selecting a case that is demographically or programmatically "average" (Mertens, 2014, p. 262). Critical case sampling, on the other hand, involves selecting a case that is "for some reason, particularly important in the scheme of things" (Patton, 1990, p. 167, in Mertens, 2014).

For this study, I identified Sun Valley Middle School as a *typical case*. As Table 1, below, indicates, Sun Valley Middle School closely mirrors the state average as far as demographic composition. Although Sun Valley Middle School has a slightly lower population of students who qualify for Free or Reduced Price Lunch than the state as a whole, their test scores closely mirror state averages. The demographic composition of Sun Valley Middle School has remain fairly stable over the past several years, however, this stability obscures an important shift. Until recently, the bulk of the students of color at Sun Valley Middle School came from a nearby community as open-enrollees through a settlement provision of a Federal desegregation case. In recent years, though, the provision that provided transportation funding expired. At the same time, the percentage of students of color and students of low socioeconomic status who reside within the district boundaries has grown. So, while in the past the residents of the district were largely white and middle class, while open enrollees tended to be poorer students of

color, in recent years the district itself has become more racially and socioeconomically diverse.

Although "typical", Sun Valley Middle School is an interesting site for an additional reason: the school has an explicit interest in caring. The mission statement of Sun Valley Middle School is "Authentic Learning in a Caring Environment." This mission statement was developed collaboratively among staff and the school leader. Following a three year phase of figuring out how to "operationalize" aspects of the mission statement, the school year immediately preceding the proposed study marked the first year of full implementation. Although staff members continue to collaborate to refine what is being done to achieve "authentic learning in a caring environment," this represents a chance to study a school that has a strong intentional focus on creating a caring climate for students.

I chose as my *critical case* Cedarlane Academy, a K-8 charter school nearby to Sun Valley Middle School, though in a considerably more economically disadvantaged community. The student body of 430 students is composed almost entirely of first or 1.5 generation immigrants, mostly from East Africa. This study, however, will focus on the middle grades (approximately 190 students). The school utilizes the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum which emphasizes the connections between student identity and the world through intercultural understanding and respect.

Since its opening in 2008, the school has been considered academically successful based on student achievement scores, which is currently underscored by its large waitlist of over 1,000 students. The average attendance rate is about 96 -98% and a majority of

students attend this school since their kindergarten year. Like most schools in the state, teaching staff and administration are composed mostly of white women and a few white men. Importantly, student achievement at Cedarlane Academy is considerably higher than in the surrounding school district, as measured by state standardized tests. Table 1, below, details a basic demographic breakdown of the two schools.

Table :1 Demographic Characteristics of Schools vs. State Average

	Sun Valley Middle School	Cedarlane Academy	Statewide
White Students	68.9%	22.5%	69.5%
Black Students	10.6%	76.2%	12.0%
Hispanic Students	9.2%	0.7%	8.7%
Asian Students	9.9%	0.7%	7.4%
American Indian Students	1.4%	0.7%	2.4%
Students who qualify for Free or Reduced Price Lunch	26.2%	90.0%	38.1%
Students learning English	7.3%	38.7%	8.3%
Students enrolled in Special Education	9.0%	8.6%	15.1%
Source: *Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Report Card Demographic Data*			

In addition to the above reasons for selecting these school sites, an additional consideration is that I have both access and history at both sites. Along with a team of two other graduate student researchers, we performed research at Cedarlane Academy during the 2014-15 school year, and at Sun Valley Middle School during the 2015-16 school year. In those cases, the other researchers and I were endeavoring to explore the intersection between caring and student engagement in a mixed-methods study. We interviewed students and teachers and developed a survey to understand how constructs of caring and engagement were related.

A number of significant findings emerged from these studies, of which I highlight two here. First, in change efforts to produce more caring and student engagement, a baseline level of ideological alignment among staff members appears to be a facilitating factor. In situations where there is no broad agreement amongst staff, implementation is likely to be uneven. At Cedarlane Academy, for example, the Director was able to select and hire every teacher on staff, ensuring some basic alignments. At Sun Valley Middle School, the majority of the teaching staff are longer tenured than the Principal. Second, the structure of activities at school does appear to have an impact on how students experience school. The relatively lower level of structure at Sun Valley Middle School led students to identify social spaces and peer relations as highly important to their experience of caring at school, whereas Cedarlane Academy students focused more on academic spaces and relation with teachers.

These findings, and my experiences at the two schools more generally, certainly color my observations in this study. In some ways this is a disadvantage, in that I cannot view events altogether naively, through fresh eyes. On the other hand, at times this experience also proved to strengthen the study. For example, when the Director of Cedarlane Academy described to me the ways in which the current school year were uncharacteristic of the school, I had a point of reference to understand the claim. Although this study largely stands distinct from the work I have previously done in these schools, I will try to be transparent about instances where my reasoning is shaped, in part, by these past experiences.

Focal teachers and students.

In considering study design, one challenge was to consider the appropriate *size* or *delineation* of the cases. I decided that considering the school as a whole might be too difficult simply because of the sheer volume of students. Instead, I opted to focus on the 7th grade at each school, reasoning that this would give me the greatest insight into the intersection of caring and power at the heart of the middle school years (Hargreaves, 1996).

Using this focus as a baseline, I identified the core subject area teachers in each grade level as well as the school administrators as a focal group of school adults. Based on observations, I selectively added elective teachers and other school support staff to the list of those school adults I interviewed and observed. Thus, the number of adults I was interested in grew over time, based largely on what I saw and heard from students and adults- the network grew organically. The group of school adults at each school is described in greater detail in the data collection strategies section, below.

In order to identify a focal group of students, I worked with school staff members at each school. Working with teachers to identify students on whom to focus my observations and interviews has several disadvantages, most notably that the students teachers identified might not be a good representation. However, I worked with teachers to get them to collaborate on selecting students, and was able to sit in on the meetings at each school where they figured out who to recruit. Thus, I was able to understand something about what the teachers thought about the students (e.g., this student is quiet, this student is smart but disengaged, etc.). Moreover, because teachers helped me to

identify a group of students that they felt was varied and interesting, and then helped me to recruit those students into the study, I believe the results were superior to the group I would've gotten if I had simply given out a mass set of consent forms to all students. That is, if I had not had teachers' help in recruiting students, the students in the study would have been those with parents who were willing to sign a consent form. This method of identifying and recruiting students yielded six students at Sun Valley Middle School, and seven students at Cedarlane Academy.

Data Collection Strategies

Data collection for this study consisted of three main parts. First, I carried out approximately 80 hours of participant observation at each site. Second, I interviewed a group of focal teachers, school leaders, and other staff members at each school. Finally, I carried out photo elicitation interviews with a small group of students at each school. Each component of these data collection strategies is described in greater detail below.

Participant observation.

Although this study is not a fully-fledged ethnography, it was quite important to have some sense of the variety of ways that caring is practiced and that power is employed throughout the school days at Sun Valley Middle School and Cedarlane Academy. As Glaser and Strauss argue, "[t]he reason why observation is so important is that it is not unusual for persons to say they are doing one thing but in reality they are doing something else" (2008, p. 29). This is often not because people intend to be

misleading, but rather because social action and interaction are complex and the people may not be able to accurately describe the subtleties of these interactions.

I did approximately 80 hours of observation at each school. In an effort to fully understand and attend to the organizational aspects of caring and power (and not merely those aspects that play out in classrooms) I observed many settings in addition to classes, including both formal and informal staff meetings, staff development days, passing time between classes, the main office, and lunches.

At times I opted to shadow a particular focal student or teacher for several hours continuously, while at other times I simply drifted through various settings of school life. Throughout the process, I kept field notes of what I was seeing. When possible, I tried to conduct short, informal follow-up interviews to ask participants about events or comments that stirred my curiosity. Even in cases where it was not possible to conduct an interview in the moment, I used my notes to guide the development of my semi-structured interview protocol, as well as to generate questions related to the experience of particular students and teachers. Following each observation period, I would generate a brief set of analytic notes, which often consisted of questions to myself or observed events that I hoped to investigate further.

School staff interviews.

After I had completed approximately 60 hours of observation at each school, I began to interview members of the staff at each school. The intent of these interviews was to understand how school staff members think about caring for students, and how

they approach using their positional power in these efforts. In keeping with Charmaz's (2014) conception of grounded theory, one of my goals in both staff and student interviews is to be sensitive to the way that I, as interviewer, and the staff member or student, as interviewee, co-construct meaning out of experiences. In pursuit of this goal, I followed Kvale and Brinkman's (2009) recommendation that interviews, to the extent possible, are self-contained stories that are interpreted within the context of the interview. I also followed the broad guidelines offered by Rubin and Rubin (2011), who suggest an interviewing approached shaped by "the interpretive constructionist philosophy, mixed with a bit of critical theory and then shaped by the practical needs of doing interviews" (p. 30). Finally, I made judicious use of examples in my observation notes as a tool to help interviewers *help me* to make sense of what I was seeing.

In order to make the scope of the study manageable, I focused on the 7th grade level team at each school. For the most part, my interviews were limited to the teaching staff for this grade at each school, plus the school leader. However, some of the interviews were guided by what I had noticed during participant observation. For example, the front desk office assistant at each school played a highly important role in the social life of the school, and consequently I added these two women to the list of staff members to interview. In most cases, I conducted one long interview with each staff member and would ask follow-up questions in informal unrecorded sessions later. However, in keeping with grounded theory's emphasis on theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 2008), I did interview some staff members multiple times in order to fully understand their role in balancing caring and power (e.g., I interviewed the school leader

at Cedarlane Academy four times). At other times, a change in what was happening in the daily life of the school would prompt me to do an additional interview. For example, two teachers at Cedarlane Academy who I had previously interviewed individually were reassigned to co-teach a class, so I elected to interview them a second time together.

All told, I gathered just over seven hours of interview data from staff members at Cedarlane Academy. This consisted of 16 interviews of 15 different individuals, including three interviews that had two staff members participating. At Sun Valley Middle School, I gathered just over 9 hours of interview data from 12 interviews of 12 different staff members. Table 2, below, details who was interviewed at Cedarlane Academy.

Table 2: Staff Members Interviewed at Cedarlane Academy

	Subject Area/Role	Biographical Information
Hannah	School Director	Nine at school, 17 as Principal/Director, 36 years in education (including teaching). Hannah is a white woman who grew up in the suburbs near the city where she now

		works.
Anya	Office Assistant	Seven at school. Anya emigrated from the Ukraine in her early adulthood, and is now approximately 50 years old.
Betsy	Math Teacher	First-year teacher. Betsy is a young white woman who grew up in a rural setting.
Thomas	Physical Education Teacher	Six years at school and in teaching. Thomas is a black male in his mid-30s.
Alyssa	Physical Education Teacher	Five years at school and in teaching. Alyssa is a white female in her mid-30s.
Mehret	Arabic Teacher	Nine years at school, 17 years in teaching. Mehret emigrated from Saudi Arabia in 2005, and is in her mid-40s.
April	Academic Specialist – Math Enrichment	Four years at school and in teaching. April is a white woman who used to be a classroom teacher, but prefers to work with students one on one.
Liz	Academic Specialist – Literacy	Five years at school and in teaching, at school since founding but took a break to get a Ph.D. Liz is a white woman in her early 30s.
Clarissa	Humanities Teacher	Seven at school, nine years in teaching. Clarissa is a white woman in her mid 30s.
Jenna	Language Arts Teacher	Nine years at school, 13 years in teaching. Jenna is a white woman in her mid 30s. She attended the public school nearest the school where she now teaches.
June	Science Teacher	First year at school, 15th year in teaching. June is a white woman in her late 50s.
Ashley	Language Arts Long-Term Substitute	First year at school, second year teaching. Ashley is a white woman in her mid 20s.
Jason	Language Arts Long-Term Substitute	First year at school, second year teaching. Paul is a white male in his early 30s.
Layla	Humanities Long-Term Substitute	First year at school, 3rd year teaching. Layla is a black woman who emigrated from North Africa as a child.
Paul	Humanities Long-Term Substitute	First year teaching, has worked at school for four years as a paraprofessional. Paul is a white male in his late 20s.
Marcus	Academic Specialist - General	Seven years at school, 14 years in teaching. Marcus is a white male in his early 40s.

Table 3, below, details the staff members interviewed at Sun Valley Middle School.

Table 3: Staff Members Interviewed at Sun Valley Middle School

	Subject Area/Role	Biographical Information
Allison	Principal of School	Seven years at school as Principal, 21 in education (including teaching). Allison is a white female in her early 40s. She lives in the community.
Jack	Dean of Students	Second year as Dean of Students, nine years in education (including teaching). Jack is a white man in his mid 30s. He lives in the community.
Kate	Dean of Instruction	Six years at school, 16 years in education (including teaching). Kate is a white woman. Her background is working in alternative high school settings.
Katia	Office Assistant	Eight years at school. Her husband is an African American man, and the experiences of her biracial students (one of whom has fairly profound special education needs) has shaped her experience, as did growing up relatively poor in a rural area of the state.
Ruth	Math Teacher	12 years at school, 14 years teaching. Ruth is a white woman in her mid-40s. She began her career in Arizona.
Derek	Science Teacher	21 years in teaching and at school. Derek is a white man who originally worked as a conservation biologist before entering teaching. He is in his early 50s. He lives in the community.
Stacy	Spanish Teacher	Third year at school, 22 years in teaching. Heidi works part-time, and is a white woman in her late 40s.
Heidi	Social Studies Teacher	19 years at school, 22 years in teaching. Heidi is a white woman in her mid 50s. She used to work for the state government. She lives in the community.
Wesley	Language Arts Teacher	Four years at school, nine years spent teaching. Wesley is a white male in his mid 30s.
Adrianna	Physical Education Teacher	15 years at school, 19 years in teaching. Adrianna is a white woman in her mid 40s. She is married to a social studies teacher at the school, and lives in the community.
Thomas	Technology Education Teacher	First year at school and in teaching. Thomas is a white male in his late 20s.
Matthew	Math Teacher (emphasis on remediation)	10 years at school, 15 years in teaching. Matthew is a white male in his late 30s.

All of these interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed, and research conclusions based on respondent answers were cross-checked with respondents to ensure fidelity of meaning.

Student Photo-Elicitation interviews.

I used a photo-elicitation method for student interviews. Photo elicitation involves prompting students to take a series of photographs of events, people, or places in a school, and interviewing students based on the photographs they take. Scholars have found that photo elicitation is a useful tool to understand student perspective and better incorporate student voices as photography provides a basis for students to share their experience (Clark-Ibanez, 2004; Harper, 2002). Torre and Murphy (2015) identify several discrete benefits of using a photo-elicitation interview method. First, photo elicitation empowers students by giving them broad latitude in how they construe their meaning-making activities. Second, allowing interviews to be more interviewee-driven also increases trust and allows the researcher to better see the world through students' eyes. Photo elicitation provides a tangible object that students can use to help frame and describe their meaning-making activities regarding abstract concepts.

Although the photos that students took served as a major focus and jumping off point in student interviews, talking about pictures also served as a useful rapport building technique that later allowed me to ask questions based on my observations and previous interviews. Because teachers had helped me to identify the focal students I would later interview months in advance of the actual interview, I was able to draw on many examples of events to allow students to more fully describe their experiences. Table 4, below, gives the names and a brief description of the students I interviewed from Cedarlane Academy. The total cumulative interview time for these students was approximately three hours.

Table 4: Names and Descriptions of Focal Students at Cedarlane Academy

	Description
Astur	Astur has been at Global Academy since kindergarten. She is often very quiet in class, but much more boisterous in the hallways/during unstructured work time. Her parents were born in the United States, but here grandparents were born in Somalia.
Aden	Aden speaks very quickly and interjects the word "like" into his speech, both in interviews and in class. He seems to have a habit of being the person who gets in trouble as part of a group because he is less attuned to when adults are watching. He has been at Cedarlane Academy since kindergarten. He was born in the United States shortly after his parents emigrated from Somalia.
Sahra	Sahra has been at Cedarlane Academy since first grade. She is quiet in class and very focused. She expressed distaste for chaotic classes and appears to like the structures in place at the school. She was born in the United States to parents who emigrated from Syria.
Ibraahim	Ibraahim came to Cedarlane Academy relatively late (5^{th} grade). He appears to struggle academically and frequently needs redirection from teachers to stay on task. He was born in the United States shortly after his parents emigrated from Somalia.
Helena	Helena has the unusual experience of having left Cedarlane Academy and then returned after a few years at other schools. Her parents are immigrants of Ukranian descent. She was born in the United States, but her older sisters were born in Ukraine.
Erasto	Erasto has been at Cedarlane Academy since kindergarten. In class, he often seems like a bellwether student: if the class is somewhat unfocused, he will be too. However, if the class is highly structured, he is likely to be on task. He was born in Lebanon.

Table 5 lists the focal students at Sun Valley Middle School. The total cumulative interview time for these students was approximately 2.5 hours.

Table 5: Names and Descriptions of Focal Students at Sun Valley Middle School

	Description
Mary	Mary's parents are both teachers in an adjacent school district. She is a strong student academically and very involved in school activities

	(especially soccer). She is white.
Emily	In class Emily's attention wanders. In our interview, she described that sometimes when she is bored, she will take a break from working to doodle or daydream. Recently, her mother was diagnosed with cancer, which led her to elect to spend a lot of time with Katia in the main office. She is white.
Isabella	Isabella is biracial- her father is African American and her mother is Hispanic. She is intermittently engaged in class- when something I boring to her she tunes out. She voices her opinions and her peers listen to her, but she appears to have a small group of close friends.
Justice	Justice's parents both emigrated from Korea when they were children. In class, he appears to value efficiency- he often tries to work ahead while teachers are still explaining. Unlike many of his peers, he seems to do his work and then socialize, rather than alternating back and forth.
Sonal	Sonal is a South Asian child of immigrants. She is generally very engaged in class, and participates boisterously. Her way of interacting is somewhat dramatic and she phrases her answer to questions very forthrightly.
Marissa	Marissa is stressed. She is white, and her parents both work in the downtown of the nearby city center. She often feels apprehensive at school and like she doesn't have enough time to get her work done. She is usually quiet in class, and her closest friends are also among the quietest students.

Data Analysis

As noted above, the research design of this study includes elements of multiple case study analysis (Stake, 2006), but is primarily an attempt to generate a grounded theory of how caring and power intersect in schools (Charmaz, 2006). As will be evident below, because the organizational dynamics at Cedarlane Academy and Sun Valley

Middle School were often quite different, the elements of cross-case data analysis often become salient. In general, I followed the analytic approach suggested by Charmaz (2006), although I selectively employed Stake's (2006) suggestions for analyzing case study data as well.

In keeping with traditional grounded theory, data collection and analysis proceeded iteratively, and employed the constant comparative method of analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I began by undertaking sustained periods of observation at both schools, both in and out of classrooms. In addition to field notes, I wrote brief analytic memos and notes on specific questions to ask study participants. After a period of observation, I began open-coding the initial data using NVivo, focusing on generating simple short codes close to the data- codes that describe impressions, actions, and emotions (Charmaz, 2006, p. 49). In comparing units of data to one another at this stage (e.g., an interview to a classroom observation), I noted both consistencies and inconsistencies. Some of the most crucial words or short phrases that revealed important aspects of how power bears on caring and vice-verse emerged at this stage through in-vivo coding (Charmaz, 2006, p. 56). A frequency analysis of these initial codes is contained in Appendix F.

As I continued to collect interview data on both teachers and students, and occasionally to do participant observation, I also moved from open coding to focused coding. I began to feel, both personally and through my analytic memos, more confident that I had some initial analytic categories to expand (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). In some cases, my focused coding involved primitive axial relationships- connecting categories to

each other (Corbin & Strauss, 1967). These initial categories matured, over time, to become Figures 8, 19, and 20. During focused coding, I also employed some of the cross-case data analysis techniques suggested by Stake (2006). I loosely followed Stake's (2006) guidelines for analyzing cross-case data using a "merged findings" approach (p. 59). Because I had only two cases, I produced a set of assertions about caring and power that were common across the two sites (these frequently were in-classroom attributes) and a set of findings that were unique to one site or the other (often extra-classroom attributes). Trying to understand how the similarities and differences combined to produce the particular arrangement of caring and power in each school via analytic memos resulted, ultimately, in Figures 21 and 22 in this study.

As I continued to gather data and code in a focused way, I eventually arrived at the core categories and subcategories that make up the section and sub-sections of the findings of this study. Following Charmaz, I engaged in an abductive process of gathering data to generate initial categories, and then returning to gather more data in order to refine and rearrange these categories. Occasionally, my desire to test an idea about a category led me to re-interview key personnel at each school. In general, in keeping with theoretical sampling, I stopped when I felt that the categories were "saturated" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 113; Cresswell, 2007). As a matter of practical constraint, I intended for the study to last for one school year, and although I may have hoped for additional data in a few subcategories, the *case* I was studying was one grade level at each school for one year.

I engaged conservatively in theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63). Where possible, I did elevate focused substantive codes to theoretical elements, especially when the sensitizing literature reviewed in Chapter 2 indicated an avenue for theorizing (Charmaz, 2006, p. 76). However, one self-imposed criteria for engaging in theoretical coding was that the data in a category had to evince specific indications for the interaction of caring *and* power- it was not enough to understand one and infer the other.

I took several steps to increase the credibility, consistency, and transferability of the results of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, I engaged in triangulation by both performing field observations and interviewing both students and teachers. I also performed member checks in order to ensure fidelity of meaning to the interviewees' intentions. I sought out negative and discrepant cases in order to ensure sufficient saturation in data collection. I kept a detailed log on the provenance of data collected. I strove to interview a wide range of students and teachers at each school in order to gather as wide a perspective as possible. I engaged in analytic memo-writing throughout the data analysis process: as Maxwell argues "memos not only capture your analytic thinking about your data, but also facilitate such thinking, stimulating analytic insights" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 96). Between concluding the main bloc of participant observation and beginning staff and student interviews, I engaged in a sustained period of mid-course data analysis to begin to generate categories of analysis. Finally, throughout this study I strive to thoroughly contextualize my findings and conclusions so that readers can appropriately decide whether the findings apply to their context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 267).

Reflexivity and Positionality

I am a middle-class white male and former math teacher. Immediately prior to enrolling in this Ph.D program, I spent three years teaching math to middle school and high school students in the urban centers of Minneapolis and St. Paul, an experience that remains both the most challenging and rewarding role I've ever had. As a teacher, I was deeply affected by my own efforts to care for and about my students, most of whom had racial/ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic and cultural identities different from my own. For me, there was no greater feeling than when a student indicated that they felt supported and consequently became more engaged and aspirational in school. However, I was also often guilty of counterproductive virtue caring: I pushed my students to work hard because I wanted them to be successful, but they did not view the interaction as caring and it eroded our relationship and my own credibility as an educator.

At the conclusion of Norman MacLean's short story, *A River Runs Through It*, the elderly protagonist says, "now nearly all those I loved and did not understand when I was young are dead, but I still reach out to them." Of course, neither I nor most of my students are dead, but this study, and my entire decision to undertake graduate study, is shaped by a deep and unrelenting need to make sense of my own experiences in schools. Although this study is of scholarly interest to me, it is also of personal interest. As Maxwell (2012) suggests, researcher reflexivity—"the fact that the researcher is part of the world that he or she studies" is a "powerful and inescapable influence" (p. 109). My motivation is to contribute meaningfully to the field of knowledge framing caring and

power in schools, but to do so in a way that has implications for making schools function more effectively for both students and adults.

During the course of this research, I critically engaged with my own data collection and analysis practices through journaling. I hope that doing this will allow me to uncover the biases and assumptions that I am bringing into this work, and to surface these in the final report. My intention here is not to be 'objective' but rather to be transparent.

Ethics

This study was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Minnesota, as well as the school board of the participating district. Consent (and assent for minor students) will be obtained prior to interviews, and no students or teachers will be identifiable. One possible concern raised by photo elicitation researchers is that photos include people who did not consent to be in a research study (Torre & Murphy, 2015). Students taking photos were instructed to limit other people in their pictures whenever possible, and identifying features are obscured in any pictures that do include people.

Chapter Four: A Year in the Life of Two Schools

The extant literature on both caring (and to a lesser extent, power) reveals the importance of the particularities of an educational/organizational environment. In order to attend to this, as well as to improve the transferability of understandings generated by the study, I begin by describing some of the events and trends at each school that colored the perceptions of school leaders, teachers, and students during the course of the year.

The two schools in this case study were selected because one school, Sun Valley Middle School, might be said to be a *typical* case- the demographic and academic characteristics of this school mirror the state as a whole- while the other school, Cedarlane Academy, is a *critical* case- it has a high population of students who are either immigrants or the children of recent immigrants, and a student body less wealthy than the state average. Although the primary intent of this study is not to compare differences between the schools, at times the significance of the differences was so central to school life that it made comparison irresistible. Thus, at times I will refer to teachers or students generally, while at other times I will draw a contrast between the teachers and students at each school in order to highlight a distinction in how caring and power are negotiated in different school settings.

A Year in School Life

Bidwell (2001) observed that schools are characterized by long-term permanence but short-term change. Put differently, one might observe that in certain respects, every school year resembles every other school year, while in other respects each year is a

wholly unique cycle. In this section, I strive to highlight some aspects of life at each school (or in some cases, for the 7th grade class at each school) that make the year in question different from other years. In some cases these changes involve the exercise of power by teachers or school leaders in order to purposefully pursue change, while in others they are simply unforeseen events that trigger a response.

Cedarlane Academy: A difficult year.

One of the most idiosyncratic aspects of the 2016-17 school year at Cedarlane Academy has to do with the class itself. Hannah, the Director of the school, related that this class has been characterized by a higher volume of behavior problems than other classes at the school. From observations at Cedarlane Academy during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school year, it does seem as though this class has more difficulty than previous middle school classes in meeting the school's behavioral expectations.

For example, students at Cedarlane are expected to transition silently between classes so as not to disturb other classes in session, the 7th graders during the 2016-17 school year had difficulty with this expectation. Hannah related that in the past, often all she needed to do to get students to move more quietly through the hallways was to remind them of the other classes, but this year's 7th graders were more likely to shrug. The 7th graders during the 2016-17 school year also had more problems with walking out of class without permission, and petty vandalism in the bathrooms, than Cedarlane Academy had ever experienced in the past. The more experienced teachers at the school

also broadly agreed with Hannah's assessment- early in the year one noted that the year had a "tough start" while another called the group a "tougher class than usual."

Hannah hypothesized that there were several reasons why this grade year might be especially difficult. First, she said that this class had experienced a much greater than usual amount of disruption in their classroom teachers during the elementary school years. Each grade level at Cedarlane Academy has two classes, and a total grade size of around 50 students. At least half of students had a teacher quit or go on maternity leave during four of the previous six years. Furthermore, during one of the years both of the grade level teachers were new to both the school and the profession. Hannah felt that a combination of this discontinuity along with a few "crummy teachers" along the way had left the class less bonded to the school. She particularly observed this distinction in their conduct in the hallways. She notes:

> We've never had problems with kids in the past when we've asked them to just line up and walk quietly down the hallway and doing it, these kids want to clump together and talk and socialize. In the past appeals to [the idea that] that disrupts the learning of others, we'd have those students [say], "Oh, okay, never mind." These kids are like, "Too bad, I want to talk."

A second aspect of the 2016-17 7th grade class at Cedarlane Academy that made them particularly challenging from the perspective of teachers and school leaders is the continuity within the *students* of the class. Helen noted that this class had the lowest attrition in the history of the school, including no students either entering or leaving the class for the prior three years. As a result of this continuity she suggested that, like "brothers and sisters" they know exactly how to "get each other riled up." Moreover, they

can exercise a fairly high degree of coordination in classes, and "know how to whip things up."

Alas, the 2016-17 school year continued the trend of volatility in the teaching staff for this grade. The middle school math teacher was hired over the summer, and new to both the school and the teaching profession. The school hired a science teacher who was new to the school, but with 30 years of teaching experience. However, this teacher left after about three weeks. The school hired a second new science teacher who lasted approximately two months before resigning. The third science teacher did stay on from early December through the end of the year. In December and January, respectively, the humanities and language arts teachers- the two most experienced middle school staff members – left to go on maternity leave for the balance of the school year. Also in early December, the Assistant Director, who had been hired at the beginning of the year, decided the school was not a good fit for her and resigned. Partly in response to the impending departure of two highly experienced teachers for maternity leave, Hannah decided in mid-October to hire an additional administrator, a middle school coordinator, to work exclusively with the middle school classes. However, in mid-December Hannah decided that although this administrator was highly skilled, he was not making enough behavioral or academic inroads with students, so she eliminated his position. Also in response to the teachers leaving on maternity leave, Hannah decided to hire two long-term substitutes for each classroom.

Over the course of the school year, then, the seventh grade class at Cedarlane Academy had only one teacher who stayed for the entire year. Every other teacher was

replaced once, and the science teacher was replaced twice. Moreover, two administrators, both of whom had responsibilities for helping with middle school behavioral issues, came and went. It is worth noting that this staffing pattern is atypical at Cedarlane Academy. From the school's inception through the end of the 2015-16 school year, the school's administrative team was completely stable. It was unusual in any given year for more than one of the 14 elementary classroom teachers to leave. The middle school staff was slightly more variable, but even here one departure and arrival was the norm. This highlights both the extent to which the previous experience of the 2016-17 seventh grade class at Cedarlane Academy, and the 2016-17 school year in general, were unusual for the school.

Later aspects of the findings in this chapter will go into much greater detail on how students and staff members at the school reacted to these upheavals. Broadly, though, Hannah talked about two mindsets that shaped the way she responded to the volatility. First, after making a misstep in hiring more administrators, she made the decision to invest more in teachers. She argues

> One of the interesting things is my original solution was more administration when the effective solution was more teachers. I always go back to my teaching roots…We believe in teachers. [laughs] Like bringing [the middle school school coordinator] in to try to form relationships with kids starting in November. Why did I think that would be helpful as opposed to getting some people in on the ground level in the classrooms talk to the kids, see the kids every day, have a relationship with them and teach them and know them? That's one of my lessons I've taken away. I should spend money on teachers not administrators in a sense.

The second broad approach was to develop (largely by herself, though with some teacher input) a highly structured system of warnings and consequences for behavior management. The way these approaches played out over the course of the year had significant implications for the intersection of caring and power at Cedarlane Academy.

The 2016-17 school year at Cedarlane Academy was thus out of the ordinary in several ways. First, Hannah and the more experienced teachers felt that this year's class of 7th graders had more behavioral challenges than any previous class. One reason that Hannah proposed for this grade level's problems was their unusually high rate of teachers leaving during the year (most often to go on maternity leave). Unfortunately, this trend of inconsistency amongst the teaching staff continued for the 7th grade class, as they had three science teachers during the year and both the humanities and language arts teachers went on maternity leave. In general, Cedarlane Academy has enjoyed relatively stability amongst the teaching staff, so having three science teachers in a single year is unusual, and contributed to the general difficulties with the 7th grade class.

Sun Valley Middle School: Caring and rigor with an equity lens.

Unlike at Cedarlane Academy, the school year at Sun Valley Middle school was not characterized by volatility in the teaching staff or a grade level with many behavioral challenges. Instead, the major drivers of short-term change at the school were the staff grappling with events related to the ongoing implementation of the school's new mission statement, as well as events outside the school.

Sun Valley Middle School used to be an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. However, due to a combination of staffing and budget cuts, as well as concerns by Allison, the school's principal, that the IB program was generating mindsets that ran counter to equitable education, the school elected to leave IB at the end of the 2011-12 school year. At the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year the school decided to develop a new mission, ultimately settling on "a school committed to providing students with authentic learning experiences in a caring environment". The school formed two committees to guide implementation of this mission in practice- the Caring Environment Team and the Authentic Learning Team. The committees operated over several school years. The timeline of actions for the Caring Environment Team are below.

- 2013-2014
    - Committees conducted research and discussed their findings with school staff.
- 2014-15
    - Committees developed school-wide standards and three core values of caring environment: *Hard Work, All Belong and Respect*.(see table 1 in appendix)
    - Teachers developed caring environment standards and benchmarks that students should follow according to their grade level.
- 2015-2016
    - The school held several teacher workshops and grade-level teacher meetings to share ideas of how to create a caring environment.
    - The school implemented a reward system (Husky Paws) to recognize students who performed caring actions.

By the end of the 2015-16 school year, the committees had effectively disbanded, and ongoing efforts at implementation were being driven primarily via the actions of school leaders, or through the schoolwide site team.

The focus of staff development during the 2016-17 school year, which in the mind of the school's administrative team (though not always the teachers) was directly tied to the mission statement, was on producing educational equity. As part of a contract negotiation with the teacher's union during the 2015-16 school year, the school district had eliminated required staff trainings during staff development days. Consequently, much of the training and staff development with regard to education equity took place either during the week prior to the beginning of the school year, and in decentralized data team meetings or individual/small-group coaching meetings during the year.

One training that took place during the week before the beginning of school, and was revisited throughout the year, was a reconfiguration of the school's behavior tiers. Jack, Sun Valley Middle School's Dean of Students, described a repeated problem during the previous year that teachers would send a student who had misbehaved to the office. The student would receive a consequence, but then repeat the behavior days or weeks later, and teachers would become frustrated. I asked Jack about the nature of the change.

> Jeff: I guess I'm thinking specifically with regard to, you're talking about consequences and discipline. What's been the arc of that process?
> Jack: I think one of the big story-lines has been, there was once a time where we thought that if we just give students a large enough punishment we would expect to see some change in behavior… Maybe that worked for a while. There's been a period of big frustration, that's where we ended last spring [2016] and last year about this time [winter]. There were some students where

> you could throw the book at them and it didn't make a lot of difference. That led to, “Well, maybe we need to try to do things a little bit differently.” It's hard to even express in a short interview how frustrated teachers get when there's a student who's-- they're not seeing a change in behavior. The office gets perceived as being soft on discipline, or that we don't support staff which I think couldn’t be further from the truth. So now we're trying some of these different approaches. Where we get the kids to really learn, “Okay, you made a mistake, let's learn from it. Let's expect some change in behavior.””

The essence of the changes had three parts. First, an expectation that teachers would handle minor misbehavior in the classroom more often, and attempt to manage the situation relationally rather than sending the student to the office for what Jack described as a “bread and butter” (but often ineffective) consequence. Second, an expectation that teachers would strive for a “logical consequence, grounded in empathy.” For example,

> “We had a student who continuously… find ways to leave math. So Lisa just started keeping track of all the time. Once that student had earned a certain amount of time, I think about 30 minutes of missing class time, okay, now you got to make that-- You got a detention because I want that time back. So she came in and they worked on math during that time.

The final change is that, absent an email or phone call from a teacher, the office team would assume that what any student sent to the office needed was “a 10 minute break in the veranda, and a pass back to class.” Jack reported, both at the middle and the end of the year, that this approach had led to a stark decline in office referrals.

In addition to the new approach designed to produce a more equitable response to misbehavior, Kate, the Dean of Instruction, was charged with creating more equity in

classroom instruction, as well as with bringing the perspectives of families of color and families with low socioeconomic status into discussions about the school (such as parent council).

One event that had a large influence in shaping the school's discussions about racial equity during the 2016-17 school year was the high profile shooting of a black man during a traffic stop in the community during the summer of 2016. Although equity, and racial equity in particular was the planned topic of the school's staff development for the 2016-17 school year as early as the fall of 2015, several teachers reported that they believed the shooting was the reason for the training topic. It is worth noting here that during the course of my interviews, I raised race and racial equity as a topic near the end of each interview. Prior to me raising the topic, only three of the eight teachers broached the topic of equity, and no teachers mentioned the shooting. All of the school's administrative team raised the topic, generally within the first few minutes of the interview. Perhaps importantly, although approximately 33% of the school's student body are students of color, to the best of the principal's knowledge, every employee of the school district is white.

Kate described several challenges she'd faced in getting teachers to critically engage with racial equity issues at Sun Valley Middle School. One that came up several times during the course of our interviews was a sense that racial equity work was seen by teachers as "extra," whereas school leaders saw it as central to their educational mission. She noted, "I would love for those… goals to eventually be just a part of how teachers go

about their work. It's just so new to us. We are not – we haven't been explicitly talking about race and dismantling racism and our own racial identities."

Katia, the office assistant at Sun Valley Middle School (who will be described in greater detail below, but who plays a very large role in the school) feels a very personal emotional connection to issues of equity in education. She grew up in a very poor family in a rural area, and recounted the indignity of needing to turn in pink lunch tickets to get her free school lunch. Her husband is African American, and she has two biracial children, one of whom has significant developmental disabilities. She suggested that for some teachers at the school, "doing what's best for kids might be a big change if you are used to always doing things a certain way, and that is uncomfortable." Katia also noted that ameliorating some of the indignities that come from poverty, in particular, are centralized in the office and a small group of teachers. For example, she pointed out that high school basketball players occasionally came back to the middle school office for help to purchase the dress clothes they are expected to wear before games. For Katia, some of the educational equity issues at Sun Valley Middle School are related to teachers not previously being attentive to inequities.

Kate, the Dean of Instruction, related two additional challenges in her work on educational equity at Sun Valley Middle School. One challenge is that, although teachers are at different levels of preparedness for grappling with educational equity issues, some teachers insist on being given the same materials. The expectation of uniformity had caused some conflicts. Kate related,

> One of the issues that we have is on staff is that people will say, "well, why don't we all get to hear the same message? Why don't we--?" You're not all on

> the same place. [R]eally culturally in schools [there's a message that], all teachers are the same. To say you're not, and I'm not going to treat you the same because you're not the same is how I want you to treat kid children by the way.

A second challenge came in the form of Kate's work with families. One of the tests Kate faced was in changing various aspects of family and community groups (e.g., time or place of meeting) in order to bring in the voices of families who were unable to attend. In a somewhat exasperated tone, she related "caring has to be welcoming, and caring has to share power."

Interestingly, although teachers frequently did not mention race or racial equity without prompting, teachers would frequently couch their support or opposition to various school policies and events in terms of what the community wants. A majority of the teachers on staff live in the community, and would often explain aspects of the school in the context of the surrounding community. For example, when some staff members objected to eliminating the Halloween celebration in favor of a Thanksgiving celebration, two of the teachers I interviewed said something like, "but a lot of people in this community celebrate Halloween."

One final event that was on teachers' and administrators' minds during the 2016-17 school year was a review carried out by a local equity-focused education collaborative. Observers from the collaborative spent several days in the school, both in classrooms and common spaces. Their conclusions were shared with the school administrators, and then relayed to the teachers in a later staff meeting.

The primary conclusion of the review was that the biggest pitfall plaguing instruction at Sun Valley Middle School was a lack of rigor. Several teachers expressed skepticism to me about the results- suggesting that draw this conclusion after spending such a limited amount of time in the school was premature. These teachers expressed interest in a more ongoing or thorough review. Other teachers were more supportive of the conclusions.

Several administrators indicated that their discussions with teachers about the results of the review, and the changes that the review implied suggested that one problem might be differing definitions of rigor. Allison, the school's principal, explained:

> Sometimes, we believe rigorous means I've given you 100 pages of reading. Now, I may not have asked you to do any deep thinking or complexity with that reading, but because I gave you that and you have to work so long that that's rigorous, or that's hard. When they went through our classrooms, they said, "it's just your kids aren't doing much thinking. They're doing the activities compliantly, but they're not doing their thinking." Well, when you tell a teacher that who has had a lot of success with -- maybe not with kids of color -- but a lot of success in our system, and you tell them that really the problem is they have-- you haven't been that rigorous they're like, "Whoa I give homework and I make them sit and do their work." But I'm saying, "Well, I'm talking about the complex which you're asking kids to develop thinking in their learning and about their thinking. You're not asking them to do any of that." That's where our pushback is.

As, Jack, the Dean of students indicated, tying the notion of rigor explicitly with the school's caring mission is an important next step in teacher professional development at Sun Valley Middle School. He suggests, "It seems to me when I hear people talk about

like, ‘I'm going to have a rigorous class here at SAMS…’ it seems rigor is education with no joy…taking the joy out of education. I think that's not what rigor is. There might need to be some thought process put into how rigor and caring mesh together in school.”

I offer greater detail below about how my observations did and did not match with those of the education collaborative. Suffice it to note, here, that along with professional development activities around educational equity, discussions about rigor animated many of the discussions (and conflicts) amongst adults during the 2016-17 school year at Sun Valley Middle School. In the subsequent sections, I identify the two core categories that emerged from this grounded theory analysis of caring and power in school life.

Chapter Five: Consistent and Inconsistent Caring Relations in the Classroom

Students in this study rarely talked about *uncaring* teachers. Rather, the teachers whom they described as most caring were those with whom their relationships were consistent and predictable. In this section I go into depth on some of the major determinants of whether teacher-student caring relations are consistent or inconsistent. I want to emphasize at the outset that although these terms are polar, they represent a continuum: teachers had more or less consistent caring relations, not wholly consistent or inconsistent. Even teachers who students saw as being generally consistent in the ways they approached their relationships with students occasionally surprised or disappointed students, but students had broadly similar assessments within each school of what they could expect from certain teachers.

Fairness, and the Importance of Reputation

One pervasive theme in nearly every interview with students centered around teachers' fair or unfair treatment. Interestingly, students were more likely to refer to teachers fair or unfair treatment of peers than themselves. Some students did identify treatment from teachers toward themselves that they felt was unfair, but more often appraised teacher fairness toward peers.

Above all, students have an expectation of judiciousness in how teachers use their powers to discipline students. Multiple students, interviewed weeks apart, referenced an instance when a student sitting next to a trash can tossed a piece of paper a short distance but missed the trash can. The students I interviewed were appalled when the teacher

elected to send the student with poor aim to the office for throwing paper against classroom rules. It was not, in their view, a punishment proportional to the problem, and it diminished their sense of the teacher's judgment of student behavior.

Students are also acutely aware of the way that past behavior impacts future response. They perceive that teachers treat students differently based on the reputation of that student. Ibraahim, a student at Cedarlane Academy, indicated that one way this shows up is in the amount of warnings or chances given to students:

> Ibraahim: Students – like if they keep on doing a mistake as like that's their character, doing mistakes like that –
> Jeff: What do you mean that's their character?
> Ibraahim: Like when a student… just keeps doing [the misbehavior] over and over again, they'll just treat them as like first and only.
> Jeff: Okay.
> Ibraahim: Like if [the teacher] gives [the student] a warning, like that's basically an office referral.
> Jeff: Okay.
> Ibraahim: So, we won't get like second – they won't get a second chance to explain themselves or have anything like that, but students that like treat people nice, do what they are told and respect the teachers and everything like that, they might have a word like sometimes.

The experiences related about reputation and the impact that reputation has on how students are treated was remarkably similar at both schools. Sahra, a student at Cedarlane Academy said

> "Well, if you have a good reputation like if you have a good student sometimes you might get a little, not much, but if you get a little bit – you might get a little bit more, not necessarily care, but just like they'll kind of just let you get away with some stuff. Like if you are a good student and then

> you might talk a little bit once in a while, they let you get away with it versus if you are a student that talks all the time and if you talked then they are kind of faster."

Sonal, a student at Sun Valley Middle School related

> "Versus me and this other kid, I tend not to get in trouble versus this other kid, he gets in a lot of trouble. The teachers take an eye on him. If he gets in trouble again, they'll yell at him. Versus if I do the same thing, I'll get in trouble just not get the biggest punishment he does. He'll probably have to go to the office and the teacher will just tell me to stop or something."

Students generally viewed such treatment as unfair. However, what appeared to matter more to students than whether or not teachers had lower tolerance for misbehavior with some students than others, was how frequently teachers exhibited this type of unfairness. Students felt it was natural for teachers to occasionally jump to conclusions with students who frequently misbehaved, but did expect teachers to be judicious.

One particularly egregious way of acting unfairly, mentioned by several students, occurred when a teacher opted to punish the entire class for the misbehavior of one student. As Aden, a Cedarlane Academy student explained,

> "Like sometimes the teacher will base something on like one person like if a one person didn't mistake and the entire class is like that one person was like they treat everybody else with that one person and what he did even though that none of us act like that way."

Other students emphasized that it made things seem chaotic, or unpredictable when teachers tried to gain control of the class in this way.

Over half of the students at Cedarlane Academy described one teacher- Ms. June, the third and final science teacher – as being especially judicious in this way. Aden took a

picture of Ms. June's room and described it as being an especially caring classroom in the school.

Figure 2: Ms. June's Room in the Morning

A different student, Erasto, noted that Ms. June is not as quick as some other teachers to send students to the office: "like, if somebody does something, they don't just get an office referral right away." One might suggest that students, especially those who misbehavior, may simply prefer leniency. However, based on my observations, the level of misbehavior or off-task behavior seemed lower (or at least similar) in Ms. June's class compared to other classes. Other students noted that when a student was having trouble

with an activity she offered alternatives, and two students said that she seemed to take things less personally than some teachers.

Another factor that many students pointed to was how teachers reacted when they made a mistake. Students acknowledged that emotions from both students and teachers play a role in these interpersonal interactions. Emily, a Sun Valley student, reflected "there's always that one time of day when it's just a little stressful, when everyone is a little cranky, everyone wants to go home and it's just a little chaotic." Mohamed echoed this sentiment: "Sometimes in the heat of the moment, it seems like the teacher is just lying on you and stuff when she's…. not really lying, she just made a mistake."

At these moments, one way that teachers' reputation for fairness can suffer in the eyes of students is unwillingness to admit a mistake. Aden, a student at Cedarlane Academy describes a situation where two students are "fighting," but which is misinterpreted by the teacher:

> "Because sometimes it's actually like intentional, not intentional so then --- and the teacher takes it as like a harsh thing so then-- like sometimes they just make a mistake… And some students like even the students that got picked on, will speak out like, 'No, that was just a joke,' but they'll still get in trouble for it. They still get sent to the office sometimes."

Several students described similar situations, expressed that they viewed this as an abuse of teacher power because the consequence stems from a misunderstanding that students feel they have corrected.

In addition to being highly aware of the ways teachers fairly or unfairly (in the eyes of students) deal with behavior issues, students' develop a sense of teachers' fairness

from the ways that they artfully or inartfully deal with student misunderstandings or lack of knowledge. One student, Gabriela, took a picture of the corridor leading to a classroom (the choir room) where she'd had several experiences that she perceived as uncaring.

Figure 3: A classroom where Gabriela has had trouble

Gabriela related that this teacher was a “good teacher,” but was occasionally uncaring because his high expectations led to situations where students who didn’t know the answers to questions became uncomfortable.

> But there were times where I didn't understand what he would be talking about and then he would just out of nowhere call on me. If I didn't know the answer he wouldn't go to someone else. He would just wait till I knew what to

> answer. Even if you don't know it, he'll just push you to understand but you can't… [One of my friends had a problem with this too]. She had confronted him about it and she's like, "No I don't want to answer because I don't know it." He kept saying, "Well, you have to." and she just walked out of his classroom.

Gabriela's feelings about this teacher were complicated. She reiterated several times that she felt he was a good teacher in the sense of knowing and being passionate about his subject. However, she also indicated that she had multiple interpersonal interactions with him that made her feel bad or uncomfortable in his class- each of them related to being unable to answer a question or perform to the teacher's high expectations.

Similar situations played out at Cedarlane Academy. For example, during one of observations, the class was somewhat chaotic. Several groups of students were having boisterous conversations during a science lab. The teacher sent one of the students to the back of the room (presumably for being too loud). The student shuffled to the back and sat down. Several minutes later, I heard the following

> Student: "Why you send me back here?"
> Teacher: "Please don't ask me why."

The student, though, was genuinely perplexed. In a conversation later, he said he knew it was because he had been talking, but all of his friends were also talking, as was most of the class. He couldn't understand what had made his behavior different than any other students'.

A few weeks later I observed a similar situation in the Language Arts class. A student was leaving to go to the bathroom, and his partner in the classroom activity wanted to make sure he'd cleared it with the teacher.

Student 1: “I already told him.”
Student 2: “Make sure he knows you’re going.”
Teacher: “He already talked to me, it’s okay.”
Student 2: “I just want to make sure.”
Teacher: “That’s not really your job.”
Student 2: “He’s my partner.”
Teacher: “Good to know.”

After this conversation, the students held exchanged irritated glances and held a low volume conversation. It was clear from the conversation that the student was actually apprehensive about his friend getting in trouble. These students, in the late fall of 7th grade, had previously spent their entire school career taking whole-class bathroom breaks- they are unaccustomed to leaving class on their own. The teacher (new to both the profession and the school) was asserting his power in a way that dismissed students’ genuine lack of knowledge and anxiety.

Somewhat later in the year, I was observing a chaotic period of a humanities class. Several groups of students were holding loud, off-task conversations, while others were working on the assignment as the teacher circulated. The teacher attempted to reset the class and get students to quiet down. The teacher resumed circulating. As the teacher neared one female student, who had been quietly holding up her hand during the entire sequence of events, the student called out. The teacher responded by giving the class a discipline mark for the outburst, while the student under her breath mouthed “she won’t help me.” Students were also frustrated when they reached out for help and teachers made them feel like their misunderstanding was their own fault. As Erasto, a student at Cedarlane Academy related, “And then, once they start helping you… like sometimes

you get frustrated because they keep on explaining themselves and explain something as kind of like the students problem when they don't get it."

At both Cedarlane Academy and Sun Valley Middle School, teachers expecting students to have knowledge that they did not have, or responding to their authentic concerns and anxieties dismissively had a corrosive effect on caring relations between the student and the teacher because it contributed to students' sense of unfairness. One instance of the opposite case- of a staff member understanding how students' lack of knowledge contributes to conflict in class, also helps to illustrate the point. In a staff meeting at Cedarlane Academy, there was a protracted discussion of students misusing their iPads. After listening for a time, Hanna, the school's Director, observed "I think it's they don't know the rules. They want to use the school technology the same as they use their home technology." In a later interview, Hanna described this approach as being central to her – and the school's – guiding philosophy: Assuming that students need to be explicitly taught and re-taught expectations ensures that students at least know what they should be doing.

Students' sense of fairness in a classroom was closely tied to their perceptions about the consistency of caring in that classroom. Students expected teachers to be judicious in their treatment of misbehaving students, to not allow students' reputations to be the baseline for teachers' responses, to understand what students' knew (and not punish them based on lack of knowledge), and to apologize when they made mistakes. Teachers' judgment in complex emotional situations formed the foundation of caring

relations in the classroom, and teachers who students identified as often unfair rarely had consistently caring relations.

Favoritism and a Capricious Classroom Environment

One aspect of school life that emerged as central to the stability of caring relations was the notion of favoritism. Favoritism is a particular kind of unfairness where one's social standing in the classroom, rather than one's actions and needs, dictates how one is treated. As described above, students' sense of teacher caring was disrupted when teachers displayed a lack of judiciousness either in dealing with misbehavior or in addressing students' misunderstandings. Students were willing to accept that teachers might simply make errors in these circumstances, and students' sense of teacher caring was particularly undermined when teachers were unwilling to admit mistakes or were dismissive of student concerns.

Favoritism, however, was seen by students as *willful.* Teachers, in students' minds, choose to play favorites. Emily, a student at Sun Valley Middle School, related the following:

> "There's another picture of a room I took and in there I feel like the teacher judges me a lot based on my art style and because of a mistake I made in sixth grade when I questioned the grade I got on a project, and she hasn't taken a liking in me that much and she favorites a lot of other students and really skims over my work."

Figure 4: Emily's Picture of the Art Room

When I mentioned this idea to teachers, they protested that they wouldn't hold a grudge against a student in this way, though they acknowledged that subconsciously they probably do have favorites. For Emily, though, the sense of not being the teachers' favorite (especially in art, a subject in which she has great interest), is personal in a way that teacher' failure to deal judiciously with misbehavior is not.

Another student at Sun Valley, Sonal, expressed the harmfulness of favoritism in particularly strident terms. She said

> "The teachers say, "We like all students equally". That's one of the biggest lies I hear because you can tell by their faces. If you put another student in front of them versus another student, they're going to smile at the good student like not smile at the other student."

For Sonal, the idea that teachers don't have favorites is patently false based on her observations of interpersonal interactions. For some students, like Emily, not being a teachers favorite is hurtful. For other students, like Sonal, it was more hurtful that teachers professed not to have favorites, but clearly did. For both students (and others) this introduced a sense of doubt into how they through about teacher caring.

As noted above, and as will be discussed in much greater detail below, students seemed to have a basic, taken-for-granted expectation that their teachers cared, or tried to care, for and about them. What students generally described, rather than caring or uncaring teachers, were actions teachers took that increased or diminished the quality or reliability of care- the extent to which students felt their needs were being consistently met. Injudiciously dealing with behavior problems is one action that diminished the quality of care, for example. Numerous students, however, described favoritism as striking at the heart of caring relations in the classroom: does this teacher care about me, or does he *care* about me? One student, Sahra, at Cedarlane Academy summarized her feelings- "Also like – or you can tell [if a teacher cares] if you raise your hand and she might have like favorites or she might pick on someone else besides you and it might happen constantly. So that can prove it; she cares about me or not."

One interesting corollary to students' apprehension about and distaste for favoritism is that adults, particularly at Sun Valley Middle School, felt similarly. Caring relations between adults often mirrored those between adults and students at each school- a finding that will be discussed in greater depth below. However, it bears mentioning here that several teachers brought up a perception of favoritism by school administrators that eroded social trust. One teacher, Heidi, summarized this feeling.

> I feel in this building there's a perception, there's some favoritism by administration so people are more wary of speaking up… People are worried because we had an administrator here, I don't know, ten years ago, who really was-- He was the superintendent and he really favored groups, pockets of staff and then [the people] he didn't [favor] he really pushed to get rid of and he was successful in many instances so I think the people have been here for a long time are wary about that.

In addition to eroding students' and teachers' sense of feeling authentically cared for, favoritism eroded the likelihood that they would speak up and contribute in class or collaborate with peers. Teachers who students felt often played favorites were also those who students identified as having highly unstable and unpredictably caring relations in their classrooms.

Acknowledgment of Individual Student Needs and Emotions

Another theme that emerged, both from interviews and observations, is that those teachers who have the most stable caring relations with students take an *inquiry* approach to understanding student needs. Furthermore, teachers with particularly consistent caring

relations with students take steps to acknowledge students' needs and emotions, even when they cannot meet those needs in the moment.

Importantly, the school administrators at both schools highlighted this need to inquiry about and acknowledge each individual students' needs as a major motivator of how they do their work. Each school leader described how one of the most important priorities in how they defined their role was supporting teachers' work with students, and keeping aspects of education that don't involve students out of teachers' lives. Hannah, the school Director at Cedarlane Academy described the challenge faced by teachers as she saw them:

> If you said to most people, middle school teachers deal with 100 kids a day, you need to understand how a hundred different people think and feel and act and respond in a number of different situations, and you have to do snap judgments on a minute by minute basis and figure out what's going to work for each kid. I mean, that's an unbelievably complex and difficult job, and it's exhausting.

Allison, the Principal at Sun Valley Middle School occasionally became frustrated when teachers wanted to spend time on logistics rather than classroom life. She said:

> I'm going to give you all the hours you need to talk about how you want to embed formative assessments in your classroom so that you can change your instruction to meet the kids' needs. You want to talk to me about selling hot dogs? Your brain is so much better as a teacher. Why waste your time on hot dogs.

Both school leaders believe that to teach well, one must spend a lot of energy getting to know, and meet (as well as possible) the needs of each individual student.

One important observation is that teachers at each school often tended to see caring actions as something "extra," or not related to the central teaching and learning activities of the classroom. For example, teachers at both schools talked about checking in with students about their evenings, activities, or personal lives as they enter the classroom, or during a free moment in work time. The ways teachers most frequently described showing that they cared for students had to do with developing this personal knowledge about students, and taking an interest in their lives.

Students did talk about these behaviors as caring, but were far more apt to mention various aspects of classroom life (such as fairness and favoritism) as defining the character of their caring relations with teachers. However, students occasionally did describe particular instances of teachers taking a particular interest in some aspect of their life or classroom experience, and using that to help them with a personal or academic problem- these were examples of teachers "going the extra mile," as one student put it. During the course of coding, I became curious as to why students tended to mention certain teachers or instances of this sort of personal interaction as being especially caring, but seemed less attuned to other teachers or instances.

Noddings (2005; 2006) has observed that caring is intersubjective- it is defined as caring by the giver and receiver as care. Without asking a student and teacher in the immediate aftermath of an interaction whether that action is caring, it is impossible to know for certain how the actors interpret the interaction. Nonetheless, I was curious why

students had very different reactions to interactions that seemed similar on the surface. With this question in mind, I separated my classroom observation notes and teacher interviews into two groups- those teachers for whom one or more students had identified certain actions as "going the extra mile" and those who hadn't. I re-coded the notes to try to understand, what, if anything, was different about the way those teachers interacted with students.

Two main themes emerged. First, those teachers who went the extra mile were more likely to interact with students in a way that *took an inquiry approach* to students' needs. In some cases this was as simple as making sure a student was organized, but in others it involved checking in on a student's emotional health (the status of a mom with cancer, for example). Perhaps most importantly, these teachers often then acted immediately on this knowledge by giving the student time, an alternative activity, or words of support. In contrast, some teachers seemed to be *performing* caring (as interest in students), or engaging in virtue caring (Noddings, 2001). A quote from one teacher at Sun Valley Middle School typifies this view:

> A lot of teachers have conversations with kids in the hallway, like just casual conversations and that puts teachers on a different level and it builds relationships with kids. I feel like kids would say that they feel like they know a teacher or at least one teacher in the building knows something about them other than what they see in class.

For these teachers, their interest in students appeared to be more a strategy for strengthening or shoring up student relationships- but they were less likely to use that knowledge during the course of class. Put differently, what they learned from the student was less important than the knowledge itself. These

In an important way, this way of getting to know students appeared to be about storing knowledge for future use. Teachers who had more consistent caring relations gathered knowledge to use in order to better meet students' needs, whereas teachers who gathered knowledge to strengthen their relationships with students were more likely to use the knowledge in a transactional way or a form of currency with students.

The second theme that emerged was that teachers who take an inquiry approach to caring are more likely to acknowledge students' expressed needs and emotions even if they cannot, in that moment, fulfill them. For example, in the case of a fairly disruptive student outburst, one teacher (who several students said they had an especially stable caring relationship with) talked with the student at some length about what the problem was (in this case, a combination of misunderstanding and hunger). In other classes, this same student- who had frequent behavioral challenges – was often referred back to the task or rules. This attentiveness to emotional needs, even if those needs cannot be fully met, appears important.

One teacher, Wesley, at Sun Valley Middle School, highlighted this intention to understand and act on the individual needs of each student. He suggested:

> I feel like we look at things more in shades of gray and we look at a kid and how best to respond to an individual kid. I don't know if it's is necessarily any one policy more so than saying… we need to look at every individual situation and individual kid. And a kid yells out the F word in the middle of class right. There's a million different reasons why that might have happened and we can't just -- not that that's acceptable to yell the F word in the middle of class, but looking at what led up to it and how... I feel like [our classroom rules] are used more to support the kid [than to punish].

Although the school leaders at both schools sought to create space for an inquiry approach to caring, teachers approached relationship building in divergent ways. Those teachers who students described as having stable caring relationships were more likely to use knowledge about students' emotional states with some immediacy, and to deeply acknowledge their emotions. Other teachers who had more instrumental or unpredictable caring relationships seemed to approach knowledge about students as a form of currency to be expended in student relationships. Put differently, some teachers used the power inherent in their attention to attend to students emotional needs, while others tended to use the knowledge as a currency for future interactions.

Emotion and Metacognition Talk in Classrooms

Another aspect of classroom life that appears to matter for the stability and consistency of caring relations between students and teachers is the frequency and type of talking about emotions in the classroom. Those teachers with the most highly stable caring relations in class (as described by students) talk all the time about emotions, and ask students to metacognitively observe their actions and reactions with great frequency. For example, during one 20 minute classroom activity in a Language Arts class at Cedarlane Academy, Ms. Jenna asked

1.) "Show me on your fingers, does your conversation feel productive right now?"
2.) "What does it mean to multitask?"
3.) "How do I really know you've read your book?"

4.) "How will I see participation happen?"

Each of these questions asks students, in their mind's eye, to see themselves acting in a certain way.

In an important sense, this is merely a form of behavioral regulation. However, it also seems closely tied to another form of self-management that Ms. Jenna strives to help students engage in: that of naming and responding to emotions. During an observation later on in the year, students were working together to create a song for types of conflict in literature, that they would then present to the class. As the clock wound down toward the presentations, the noise and activity level in the class rose steadily, until it felt almost manic. Ms. Jenna recaptured the classes attention, and noted, "There's some excitement right now, we are feeling anxious. It's intimidating to present." She paused for a moment and nodded a few times- the class murmured, but mostly stayed quiet. Then she asked, "what might be some appropriate reactions to these presentations?"

One student raised his hand and volunteered, "we shouldn't laugh." Ms. Jenna thought for a moment (and moved her finger to her forehead so students knew she was thinking) and then asked "Can we laugh if it is funny?" Students laughed, and nodded with Ms. Jenna. Then she asked, "What else?" A different student raised her hand and said, "We should smile." Ms. Jenna smiled, and said, "Yes, we should- I think it will be fun! We will start in four minutes."

One may argue that this sort of talk about emotion and metacognition is more about control than caring. Undoubtedly, teachers engaging in talk of this kind are making use of their power to outline the bounds of appropriate and inappropriate conduct in the

classroom. Furthermore, interactions of this sort seem to echo the sorts of culturally insensitive caring than Valenzuela (1999a) and others have described. Who is to say, after all, that there is one appropriate way to respond to a presentation? For some, the best way to respond to a singing presentation may be to shout affirmations or dance along. Certainly there are profound cultural differences between Ms. Jenna, a middle class white woman, and her students, immigrants or the children of immigrants from East Africa.

These are fair criticisms to be sure, however, Ms. Jenna was also a teacher identified as particularly caring by six of the seven students I interviewed at Cedarlane Academy. One reason may be her effectiveness, using talk about metacognition and emotion, at establishing her moral authority in the classroom (Noblitt, 1993). Noblitt (1993) studies elementary students, and it is entirely possible that as students enter later adolescence and high school, their sense of disconnection from a culturally grounded caring at school grows (Valenzuela, 1999).

One highly important distinction, though, may be that Ms. Jenna and other teachers who talk frequently about emotions do recognize and affirm the *emotion* even though they may place limits on appropriate behavior. Put differently, there is a component of comfort that helps students feel like they belong in the classroom. Students in interviews about these teachers would often say things like, as Ibraahim said of Ms. Clarissa (another teacher at Cedarlane Academy), “she can say what you’re feeling and she knows it.” Earlier that same day, I’d heard Ms. Clarissa saying to Ibraahim, “I know you’re feeling frustrated, but you need to take a moment to think.” It is a recognition that

something is difficult combined with a statement of affirmation (you can think it through, even though it is frustratingly hard).

In contrast, consider an interaction in a different class at Cedarlane Academy where students were presenting a group project. There was again a good deal of excitement and apprehension in the room, and students were talking and exclaiming as their classmates presented. The teacher gathered the attention of the class, and asked, "does a comment need to be spoken about everything they say?" The class chorused, "No." The teacher here, though, does not name the emotion. The presentations are engaging and dramatic, but there is ongoing tension because the students have very little guidance besides that they can't talk.

Talking frequently about emotion, and accurately naming emotions appears to give students a sense that teachers understand them better. It also appears to give teachers credibility to rarely and judiciously call student emotions inauthentic. For example, one day near the end of a trimester several students were held back from an extended recess because they were failing a class. The students (four boys) were sent to Ms. Clarissa's class to work. They entered the classroom loudly making fun of the situation, and joking about failing class. Ms. Clarissa quickly turned to them and said, quietly and firmly, "You're telling me it's funny that you're failing a class because you're choosing not to do the work. I know that deep down inside, you don't feel that way." The effect was electric- the conversation ended, the boys went to their assigned seats and pulled out their schoolwork. One can easily imagine a situation where the boys became angry, or shrugged their shoulders. However, Ms. Clarissa, like Ms. Jenna, frequently talks about

the emotions running through class. The boys were accustomed to hearing her talk about emotions in a way that felt authentic to them.

In important ways, teachers' efforts to care for and about students link to other emotions as well, through empathy. One function of teachers trying to authentically care for students is to push teachers to unlock students' emotional states in a way that also helps teachers to *shape* those emotional states. Teachers who are able to help students (and, in some cases, the entire class) make sense of their emotions also gain credibility to question students' emotional projections.

The emotion-talk that teachers do in classrooms is different than other intersections of caring and power in classroom life. Where fairness and judiciousness are teachers using their power to produce a more caring classroom environment, emotion talk in classrooms is a way that teachers care for students that also generates more power for them. Teachers who are able to skillfully navigate students' emotions gain a special form of knowledge about them that allows them to grow students' ability to deal with difficult or frustrating situations. This additional reservoir of power for teachers actually complements and compounds teachers' efforts to care, and thus produces more consistent caring relations, because it allows teachers to ask more of students.

A Vision of Students' Exercise of Power

Another factor that contributed to students' sense of having consistent caring relations with teachers is for teachers to have a vision for the way students will exercise power in the world and authentically connect their school experience with their lives

outside of school. There were hints of this theme at Sun Valley Middle School, but it emerged much more strongly at Cedarlane Academy. Importantly, this vision for the way students might exercise power did not always extend to power in the classroom- rather, teachers tended to view the classroom as a staging ground for helping students think (in a very structured way) about their place in the world.

For Hannah, the Director of Cedarlane Academy, the idea of students having the skills, power, and knowledge to make change in the world springs from the mission of the school and is an important factor she considers when hiring new staff members. She characterized her thinking about new staff members this:

> Well, one thing we do is we want [prospective teachers] to understand the history of the school and the context of the school and what our mission is. We're a mission-driven institution, so we want people to understand that we're really interested in turning kids into good global citizens, that's our priority focus. We want teachers to know about how we have the school culture we do, which has to do with the various types of student behavior management systems we have, one of which is school-wide positive behavior support, which is that you want to be praising kids and positive with them more than you want to be negative with them. A huge part of our school culture is to try to affirm people rather than to oppress people.

This idea of affirming rather than oppressing extends directly into her vision for students. Slightly later in the same interview, she described it this way:

> Well, I want them to believe that they can contribute to the world, they can make a difference in the world, they can change the world, they can make an impact as a global citizen in the world and I want them to have the skills to be able to do that.

The teachers whom students most frequently described as especially caring at Cedarlane Academy articulated very close echoes of this same vision. For example, Ms. Clarissa said:

> I want them to have confidence in themselves, confidence that they can make a difference in the world. I want them to have the analytical and academic skills to figure out what's going on and to do higher levels of academic work in high school and hopefully someday in college, and to be good people, people who care about each other, care about what's happening. The IB learner profile is that it's supposed to be the end result of somebody having an international baccalaureate education, that they're open minded, they're caring, they're principled, they're risk takers. Those attributes are what they should walk out the door having those characteristics that they can take to the world.

For all teachers at Cedarlane Academy, and especially for those who students identified as especially caring, this idea of affirming students and helping them to believe that they can change the world is a motivating part of classroom life. It imbues both the curriculum (which is civically and internationally focused), but also the way teachers redirect students. Students did sometimes talk about acting in caring or helpful ways in terms of the values of the school, but also frequently couched it in terms of pleasing their teachers. For example, Astur said

> Like if a student is kind or something like that and if – they usually get rewarded. Like, if you are helping a friend stop talking or stuff like that or like helping them on the worksheet, the teacher will sometimse – like if they say ‘level zero like no talking’ and then you are helping out a friend, they are going to let it go.

Another student, Aden, closely echoed this comment when he said, “Because if I like care about other people then the teacher’s going to be nice too and then she is going to think that I am like a good person. And so, she’s going to trust me and everything.” At times, some of the reciprocal and helpful values at Cedarlane Academy seem to be interpreted by students as a way to please their teachers, but at other times (discussed below) they do rise to the level of awareness of one’s own power in the world.

Compared to the observations and interviews I performed at Cedarlane Academy in past years, there was a much greater emphasis by school adults placed on the social position of students as Muslims, and in some cases, refugees. In the past teachers and administrators spoke about the challenges levied on their students due to poverty or their status as recent immigrants, but there was less explicit acknowledgement of the systemic racial and religious discrimination their students faced. This year, in large part due to the Presidential election, school activities related to the students’ exercise of power as (largely) Somali-American Muslims became a significant part of school life. Several teachers talked about this, including June.

> June: I think [Cedarlane Academy students] truly believe they can change the world, and that thinking wow, if you had a kid this age when they can often be too cool for school, if they believe they can change the world, they're going to want to change the world, [laughs] they think they can. I want to keep that going.
> Jeff: It's positive or it gives them a sense of empowerment?
> June: Empowering, yes. I think they think, and God that's so important. Especially for a group of kids who could be-- They have trouble getting

> power, immigrants' kids, they have to fight hard. [laughs] I think this is very positive.

Several teachers spoke about a particular class taught by two teachers, Ms. Liz and Mr. Anthony, that brought students' exercise of power to the fore. Ms. Clarissa said, "The other thing too, with Anthony and Liz's class, they're doing a lot of things with social justice current events. The kids are really like that and they really feel there's some meaning there. That's important to them." Hannah, the school's Director echoed this: "Like Liz and Anthony making – they did a whole thing on protest posters that they are making. So they can attend various protests that are going on and some of our kids and staff are doing that."

Although this desire to help students believe that they can be powerful in the world has characterized Cedarlane Academy for the past three years that I have been observing there, it appears to have taken on a special urgency this year. Students in interviews often reiterated their need to exercise power, and for some it reflected a need to claim a place. Erasto said, simply, "I think I belong in America."

Figure 5: Erasto's Picture of Belonging in America

For other students, their ways of thinking about power and their place in the world were less tied to discrimination, but for each student I interviewed it was important both to go out into the world, and to bring the world into Cedarlane Academy. For example, Astur was one of several students who took a picture of a service trip to a nearby school. She said “So, there is a seventh grader, she is in my class and we went to this school. It’s a school in St. Paul and then we volunteered for the – like read books for kids.

Figure 6: A Service Trip to a Nearby School

Other students took pictures of a painting that the entire school had collaboratively created with a visiting Japanese artist the year before.

Figure 7: Painting Made with Mr. Yuya

Every single student I interviewed at Cedarlane Academy mentioned classroom activities and field trips that helped them understand the world, locate their place in the world, and exercise power in the world as factors that helped them to feel cared for in school. Students and teachers did mention activities like these at Sun Valley Middle School as well, but less frequently.

One way that teachers used power in the service of caring for students was by selectively augmenting students' own ability to exercise power in the world, or, at least, to provide a template for the exercise of their future power. Underlying this is a *belief* in students' future abilities and a confidence in their becoming people who are powerful.

One might say that one manner in which teachers care for students is to lend them power that students themselves cannot access. This impacts life in classrooms indirectly, but acutely, by undergirding classroom relations with connections to the world beyond the classroom. Teachers' authorizing and encouraging students' use of power in the world creates a more stable basis for caring relations in the classroom by creating a parallel virtual system where students and teachers co-exist as equals.

A Long Time-horizon for Students' Success

Those school adults who have the most stable caring relations with students also tend to adopt a long time-horizon for student success. In many ways, this is closely related to having a vision for students' exercise of power- teachers who a long view of student success are also more likely (based on my interviews) to have definition of caring that relates to the way students will interact with the world as adults. However, in addition to this, teachers who have a longer time-horizon for student success seem less likely (based on interviews and observations) to view particular student interactions as a one-off, and instead to place them in a broader context.

Take, for example, the following interview excerpt from Matthew, a math teacher at Sun Valley Middle School.

> Jeff: You feel like on the math team there's a mentality that the problem will be able to be solved and …?
> Matthew: And I wouldn't say, "I feel that." I think we're pretty confident. If you give us a problem, we're going to it get solved. We might need extra time though. We may need three years to figure it out. I mean we may need from the one year and sixth grade to eighth grade to get it figured out but we will

> figure it out. It's just a matter of time we don't always have enough time in one year to figure that out.
> Jeff: Okay. You'll have them for three- hopefully-
> Matthew: Yes. If we got a kid for three years, I'm confident that we can have them doing math on grade level.

In some ways this sentiment relates to the idea that teachers with stable caring relations adopt an inquiry approach to caring. Matthew is expressing the idea that, given enough time, he (and his math teacher colleagues) will be able to figure out how to take a student who has struggled with math in the past, and help them accelerate their progress.

However, although this breakthrough might require a protracted investigation, it also demands that teachers view their academic and personal relationships with students over a long time-horizon. In classroom observations I noticed that Matthew and other teachers with highly stable caring relationships were more likely to tolerate some lack of productivity or minor misbehavior from one or a few students, provided most of the class was on task. Put differently, they were less likely to react hastily, or to generalize the behavior of a few students to the entire class. Matthew, and other teachers with particularly stable caring relations, seem more likely to wait until they can talk with individual students (e.g., during work time), before addressing the problem. Sometimes teachers would issue non-verbal, unobtrusive redirections, but would rarely call out an individual student or the entire class.

When I asked Matthew about this approach, he described that he places greater importance on maintaining a trusting and confidence-building relationship than on in-the-moment productivity. He described how he also takes steps in class to lengthen students'

own time horizons for success- he showed me one activity where he asked students to imagine themselves in ten years, and figure out what they need to do today to get there. He also used another activity where he asked students to list their values and identify how they are living out those values today, and how they will live them in the future. Several times during conversations with students, I heard Matthew reference students' values as a way to redirect them.

Other teachers sought to draw students' attention to their growth over time. Ruth, a teacher at Sun Valley Middle School said:

> When I first taught [this topic]… they did not master it, and we just keep coming back to it, it shows up in a lot of the other work that we do. And just a couple weeks ago we did a quick assessment on it, and they were doing really well. We had a conversation as a class like, "This was hard for you guys earlier in the year." Kids that even you thought there's no chance, these kids are going to get this by the end of the year they're getting. They just need more time, more practice, and more encouragement.

Teachers generally spoke about a long time horizon in terms of academic success. However, those teachers who adopted this long view of student success rather than focusing more on one-off interactions did tend to be identified by students as consistently caring. In their own way, students did seem to observe subtle changes in relationships over time. As Sonal, a student at Sun Valley Middle School put it,

> Well, if you really want to know… with the teachers, most of the time -- It's like a new friend in the beginning. New friends act nice, but throughout the year that new friend can get meaner and meaner. With the teachers, it's like that.

Like having a vision for students' exercise of power, having a long time-horizon for students' success is profoundly related to their underlying confidence in students (and in themselves). This confidence appears to create emotional space in the classroom for more variance in students' progress and a higher degree of resilience in the source of setbacks. Confidence (as an emotional state) can create room for caring by loosening the connection between comfort and control (e.g., if one is more confident in one's abilities, one is also more willing to tolerate additional discomfort).

Students' Exercise of Power in the Classroom

In general, students at both schools felt that they had fairly limited power in the classroom. For students, one form of power that they occasionally felt they had, but more frequently *wished* they had, was the power of choice. For the most part, students felt they needed to comply with teachers' instructions and do classroom activities as assigned. Students did describe a variety of strategies for dealing with rules or activities they didn't want to take part in- for example, completing the assignment very quickly, or taking breaks from the assignment to do something else.

Students' strategies for resisting or using power were often individual. However, occasionally during classroom observations I would observe some collective action. One such action was parroting, when a few students would repeat what the teacher said aloud- this frequently caused a mild disruption in class when teachers might appear unsure, or

call students immature. Another form of collective choice was silence. Sonal, a student at Sun Valley Middle School described this approach to me.

> Jeff: What happens when the whole class feels like it's boring, it's a boring activity?
> Sonal: Sometimes in some classes, we'll be-- this is a lot of times last year when we were reading in class and everyone was bored because the teacher kept stopping and asking questions constantly, and eventually everyone just wanted to read the book and so no one just raised their hand, everyone was very tired and the teacher kind of got a little mad and so kids would raise their hands and get the answer wrong because they were just very bored and really wanted to move on to something new.

Occasionally I observed this in class- students who were clearly bored with an activity would elect to disengage by keeping quiet. Another time, during a boisterous math class at Cedarlane Academy, the teacher felt that students were not being productive, so she said, “Now we are going to be working independently.” The whole class (as far as I could tell) shouted “No!” The teacher calmly said, “Our voices are off, and we are working,” and within a minute it was true. In this case, students are not actually being non-compliant, but they are registering their disagreement (as a group). This form of control is particularly corrosive to care in that it abruptly removes student agency.

One challenge, as students at both schools related, is that the felt the line between disagreement and disrespect was thin-to-nonexistent. An exchange with Sahra, a student at Cedarlane Academy highlights this tension.

> Jeff: Is there a way that you’ve been at this school that you feel like you can disagree with your teachers without disrespecting them?

> Sahra: No. Well, maybe – no, I don't think so. Because I feel like if you just say it in a nice way, they are not going to do much, but if you do in a bad way, they are not going to do much, but you are going to get in trouble.

This catch-22 facing students- that disagreeing in a kind, respectful way was unlikely to produce any change, while disagreeing in a pointed way was likely to produce negative change- was one described by several students as they characterized their power in the school.

The Limits of the Classroom

The preceding themes, on fairness, favoritism, the importance of emotion and investigation, and preparation for engaging in the world beyond school, have all focused on caring relations between students and teachers in the classroom. It became very clear, talking to students, that classroom teachers do have a great deal of power. Furthermore, students *expect* teachers to exercise their power in their classrooms. However, teachers' power attenuates rapidly beyond the classroom walls. For students, who experience school holistically, and not as a set of individual class periods, caring and power relations outside of classrooms are often much more fraught. Furthermore, while teachers exercise a great deal of individual authority in their classes, relationships between school adults also influence the schoolwide balancing act between power and caring. These extra-classroom dynamics will be explored in-depth in the next section. Here, though, I wish to demonstrate the fairly stark delineation that students often drew between what happens in the classroom and the school as a whole.

The strongest evidence for the limits of teachers' classroom power came in the way students consistently approached three of the interview questions I asked. The question I asked first in most interviews was, "Do you think teachers at this school care if students are kind to one another?" Most students answered this question in the affirmative, though a few disagreed. When I followed up by asking students, "How can you tell?" the answers they gave invariably involved some interpersonal interaction between students in a classroom- frequently teachers mediating a squabble between partners or a small group. For example, Aden related that "If like two people partner up and the other person says something bad about it, that person like gets in a lot of trouble for saying something, even if it's a small thing that's not good about the other person." Mary, a student at Sun Valley Middle School, relayed a similar sentiment.

> Jeff: Do you think that the teachers at the school care if students are nice to one another?
> Mary: I think they do.
> Jeff: How can you tell?
> Mary: One time in science, we didn't do a lesson and instead it was more of like a bullying and cyberbullying and about how you really shouldn't that. Teachers are always saying that you can't-- when we get partnered up, a lot of times, they'll either draw sticks or really pick partners to just-- if you draw sticks or get random partner, don't groan and be all upset about it and try to be partners with people who maybe you aren't always partners with.

The third question I asked was, "Do you think students at this school will help each other, even if they are not friends?" and "How can you tell?" Here, regardless of how students answered (it was close to a 50/50 split), students *universally* recounted

something that happened outside of the classroom. Marissa, a Sun Valley Middle School student, gave a typical answer:

> Jeff: Do most students at this school help each other even if they are not friends with each other?
> Marissa: I would say yes because I remember I dropped my books in the hall because someone bumped into me, it was someone I didn't really know and they helped me pick up my stuff, even though they could've just kept walking.

Students seemed to recognize that if one wants to understand whether students in the school care about one another, one must look at events that happen *when no one is watching* (or at least no adult). In the classroom, students seem to hope and expect that adults offer at least some guidance and regulation. However, as Justice observed, "There's not many teachers out in the hallway. They're just in their class." The hallway is the wilderness, where a different set of rules apply.

At the core, students experienced that class time and out of class time were very different. I asked Helena, a student at Cedarlane Academy, to weigh the two.

> Jeff: Are people nicer to each other in class than in other places in the school, do you think?
> Helena: (Deep Sigh) Uh-huh.

Gabriela, a student at Sun Valley Middle School went further. She suggested that often, conflicts between students may pause to align with classroom rules, but then resume unabated after class:

> Gabriela: I think [teachers] do [care if students are nice to each other] because in some classes they will have signs up that say, "All belong. You should all respect." I think teachers will do something about it. If something goes on in class. They'll ask you to leave for a bit, or they'll just tell you to mind what you are saying and all that. They will care about the situation.
> Jeff: You feel teachers do get involved, and they do try to make it so students are nicer to each other. Does it work?
> Gabriela: Yes, I think it works for the majority of the time that they are in the class and then after they'll just go on with whatever was going on.

I explore in detail the ways that out-of-classroom experiences and relations amongst school adults shape caring and power in the school below. In the next section, however, I consolidate the above observations about the way that use of power in the classroom can produce consistent or inconsistent caring relations between teachers and students.

Consistent and Inconsistent Caring Relations: Summary and Interpretation

Students appear to take for granted that teachers will care (or at least *try to care*) for and about them. However, through interviews with students as well as observations in classrooms, it became clear that teachers have widely different levels of effectiveness or impact in their efforts to care for and about students. Previous qualitative studies suggest wide variability in teachers' effectiveness or impact in their efforts to care for and about students (Noblitt, 1993; Valenzuela, 1999), a finding that is corroborated by interviews and observations at Sun Valley and Cedarlane. In many ways, students accept and often feel supported by teachers, but they are also acutely aware of unfairness or inequity in the classroom. Students were able to explicitly articulate some aspects of caring relationships

in the classroom, but other aspects of these relations were much more apparent through observations.

The emotional tenor of classroom life matters a great deal to students, and varies within both schools. Interviews with teachers often corroborated their assessments. For example, contrast the comments of a teacher who was identified by most students as caring with those made by a teacher who was identified by some students as consistently less caring:

> I think when there's caring involved, kids work really hard on things that you wouldn't expect them to work hard on... in a caring classroom, you're going to see kids that you wouldn't typically see share stuff share, you're going to see kids that you probably typically wouldn't see working together, probably being able to work together and interact with each other pretty easily.

Vs.

> I don't intentionally do anything to say, "Gee I'm going to show you I care about you like this." I do a lot of-- I call it call kind firmness or structure. … I care about them I want them to succeed, if I see them struggling, I'll call them out. So that's what caring looks like.

In the first quote, the emphasis is on how caring motivates students to take risks, share emotions, and be braver. The result, in this teacher's view is students who are able to be more vulnerable, and also to get along better with one another. In the second quote, the emphasis is on the structure of relations in the classroom, individual attainment, and preparedness for class. Put differently, for the first teacher, efforts at creating a caring classroom environment produce an emotional and interpersonal response in students,

while for the second teacher, caring produces happiness. For the second teacher, it seems like classroom structure and engagement could be substitutes for care, rather than results or complements to care.

Consider another pair of contrasting examples from classroom observations at Cedarlane Academy.

A new science teacher (who taught from mid-September to early December) was introducing himself to the class after spending most of the class period watching. A short way into his introduction, after noticing a few students chatting, he remarked "for some of you, it's going to be a long year." A bit later, when two students (a boy and a girl) were repeatedly talking to each other he jokes to the class that they were "attracted to each other by gravity." The whole class started laughing uproariously, with some shouting and "oohing". It took over a minute to try to get the class to calm down. The tittering continued at a low level, so the teacher remarked that when students are having trouble, he likes to "call parents, and then the next day…". He trailed off, but the student conversations continued largely unabated. He then remarked, with a bit of pique, "we are really going to be working on this respect."

At both schools, but especially at Cedarlane Academy, teachers with consistent caring relations are very intentional about the way they help students to identify and process emotions. For example, Ms. Clarissa taught a busy and relatively unstructured class where students worked on their Lego League projects. Toward the end, she pointed out "One half of students did a fabulous job here; the other half took advantage of a free flowing class to abuse their chance." As she circulated the room, she invited student's to

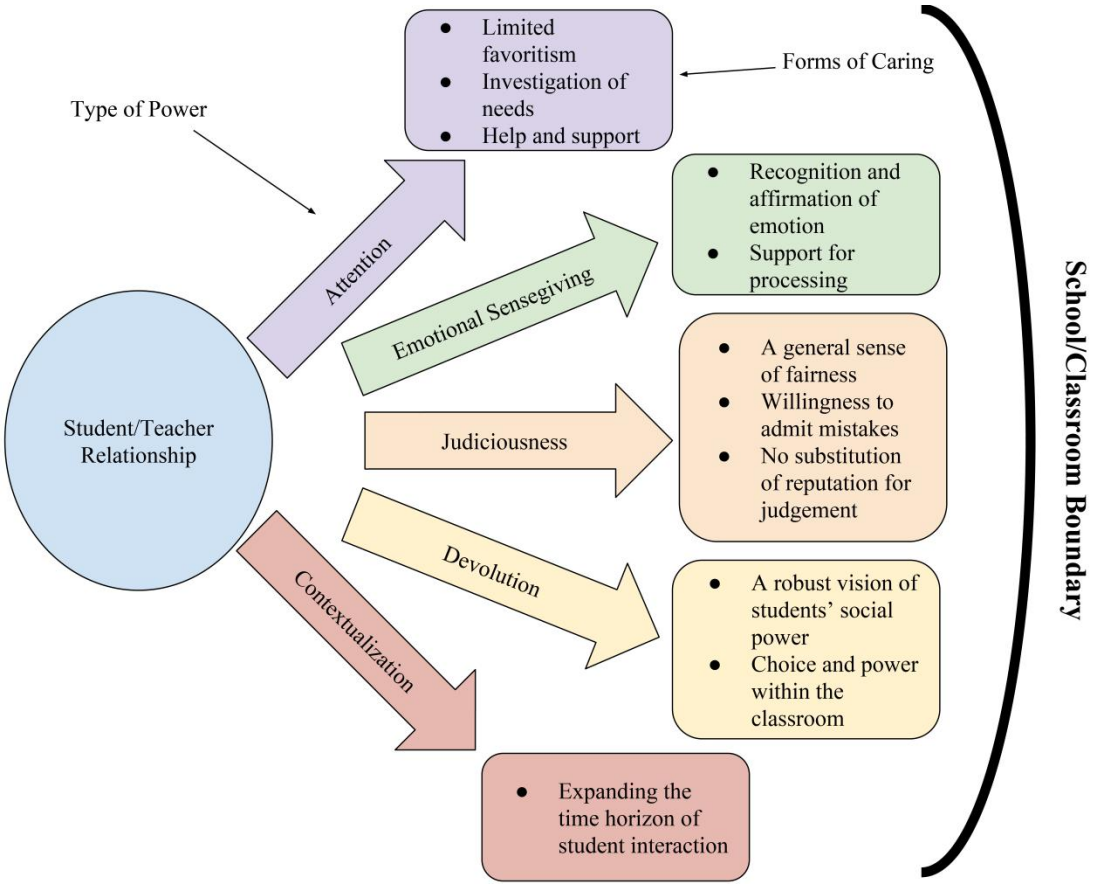
identify some of the problems they had seen, and students noted that too many of their peers were walking around without a reason, that their voice level was too high, and that there was too much talking without much getting done. Clarissa queried, "how might this impact out class?" The two ideas students offered were that there would be less trust, and less privileges in class. Ms. Clarissa silently affirmed both of these ideas by nodding her head.

In each of these two classroom observation examples, the classrooms appear somewhat chaotic on the surface. In the first though, the teacher adds to the chaos by reacting to and censuring students' reactions: the teacher feels that the class is out of control and gets carried away on the emotional cross-currents of the classroom. In the second classroom, equally chaotic on the surface, Ms. Clarissa nonetheless *feels* in control. Rather than trying to intervene in the moment, she carefully helps students make sense of their actions and emotions after the fact, and resets the class. In an important way, consistent caring relations in a classroom depend on teachers' not only understanding the emotional crosscurrents of the classroom, but also feeling in confident in their ability to navigate those crosscurrents even when the classroom is somewhat chaotic- teachers must maintain a belief in their ability to exercise power judiciously even when it might appear to a casual observer that their control is strained.

These four examples – two from interviews and two from observations – illustrate some of the principles of emotional caring in the context of classrooms. The core category that emerged through student interviews, observations, and triangulating students' feelings about teachers with observations in those classrooms is that what

matters most for the intersection of caring and power in classrooms is whether caring is *consistent and understandable* or *variable and opaque.* Figure 8, below, displays some key aspects of this relationship.

Figure 8: Types of Consistent and Inconsistent Caring Relations



The figure above displays five types of power that intersected with caring in the classroom. Importantly, these are neither the *only* forms of caring nor the *only* types of power that teachers have and use. Rather, these are the most common intersections of caring and power- the crossroads where teachers either use power purposefully or as a matter of course that in turn impact students' sense of being cared for. As noted several times above, students seem to have a baseline expectation that teachers care about them,

or at least *try* to care about them. The successful formation of a stable caring relationship depends on a number of factors, but teachers' use of power in the classroom, in the ways detailed in Figure 8, are some of the most important.

The first form of power that teachers use frequently in the classroom is *attention.* One form of teacher attention is simply time spent helping and supporting students. Students become apprehensive when they feel as though they cannot get support from teachers. Students are quite attuned to how teachers' attention is expended- in particular, students have an expectation that attention is given somewhat equitably, and caring relations become more uncertain when students feel that teachers play favorites. For teachers with the most consistent caring relations, one form of attention that they give students is not merely helping with the task at hand, but engaging in a broader and lengthier investigation of student needs in order to support that student's overall development. Teachers hoped that teachers would *know* them, not merely *know things about them.* Attention, of course, is not always positive: sometimes students would prefer teachers pay less attention. Nonetheless, a teacher's time and engagement with students is an important source of teachers' power, and directly affects how students feel cared for in the classroom.

A second form of power, discussed at some length above, is emotional sensegiving. Teachers at both Sun Valley and Cedarlane Academy had the power to *name* the emotions in the classroom, and often use this to suggest courses of action. Sometimes, poor or unskillful use of this form of power could backfire: if students feel that their emotions are misrepresented, or that the emotional tone of the classroom was chaotic,

they experienced the classroom as an uncaring place. When used with foresight and intention, however, this was a particularly potent form of teacher power because it allowed teachers to ask for changes in present and future students action on a basis of affirming how the student feels in the moment. Accurately understanding emotions builds caring relations by reinforcing trust between students and teachers.

A third form of power is judiciousness. Students expected that teachers would make mistakes from time to time, though they did expect teachers to be fair the preponderance of the time. The ability to pass judgment on student actions and misbehaviors contributed immensely to students' sense of consistent and inconsistent caring relations, especially because students' sense of fairness extended beyond their own interactions with the teacher. In particular, students identified that teachers being willing to admit and correct mistakes helped them feel that the classroom was more fair. Furthermore, although students expected that reputation (e.g., a reputation for frequently misbehaving) might guide teachers' actions sometimes, they expected that teachers would look for the truth rather than jumping to conclusions.

A fourth form of power, and one which was somewhat rare in both schools, was authorization: the granting of power to students. At Cedarlane Academy, teachers often took steps both in classrooms and on field trips to help students think about their own power, especially the power that they would have in the future. The teachers with the most consistent caring relations with students often viewed the school's vision and their practice as an explicit counterweight to social messages that their (mostly immigrant, mostly non-white) students received about their place in society. However, students at

both schools reported a sense of having little day-to-day choice in the classroom. They often employed forms of passive resistance when they felt disengaged, and didn't feel there was room to speak up.

The final form of power teachers employed that had considerable implications for caring relations in the classroom was contextualization. The teachers that students identified as most caring were likely to view their interactions with students over a long time-horizon, and indicated a strong belief in incremental growth. These teachers would often respond to student needs and misbehaviors in a way that prioritized the relationship rather than the activity. In contrast, a high proportion of one-off interactions produced a less certain climate of care. Teachers who strove to place students' efforts and behavior in the context of a long time arc, and with reference to students' interests and aspirations had more consistent caring relations.

In chapter seven, the concluding chapter, I will provisionally integrate the ways that caring and power intersect at the classroom level with the way school adults' balance caring and power (which is the substantive subject of the next chapter). Here, I'll offer a few propositions about the *functions* of caring and power, and a possible heuristic that I'll return to in the concluding chapter. For the purposes of these propositions, I am referring to binaries, although in practice no teacher practices entirely at either pole.

Table 6: Propositions about Consistent and Inconsistent Caring Relations

	Consistent, Stable, Predictable and Understandable Caring Relations	Variable, Opaque, Inconsistent and Unstable Caring Relations
Efforts at Caring are most	Inquiry-based, designed to	Instrumental, designed to

often…	deeply understand needs	routinize needs
Confidence comes from…	Belief in students and faith in one's ability to interpret the emotional landscape of the classroom	Structure, and the ability reproduce structural forms
Classroom control is produced by…	Inquiry and judgment	Structure and assumption
Empathy…	Combines with feeling as a guide to problem-solving	Combines with knowledge as a form of leverage

One heuristic that helps to illustrate the intersection of caring and power in the classroom is to think about the way that caring and control act as *substitutes* and *complements.* Substitute is a self-explanatory term, but in economics, two goods are said to be perfect complements if having more of one is not useful without having more of the other. For example, having 12 left-footed shoes is not especially useful if one has only a single right-footed shoe. Teachers who produce less consistent caring relations often treat control as a substitute for care, particularly in fraught or chaotic situations. Control acts as a way to routinize or smooth-out needs that are difficult to meet in the classroom. Teachers with more stable caring relations are likely to treat caring and control as complementary: one needs to carefully exercise control to be more caring (e.g., by being fair and judicious), but one also needs to cultivate greater power in order to produce more caring (e.g., by helping students make sense of and act on their emotions). This heuristic also applies to the organizational aspects of caring and power in schools, to be explored below.

Chapter Six: Loose/Tight and Tight/Loose Schools: Problems, Solutions, and Decision-Making

The forms of power discussed in the previous chapter are largely limited to the classroom. However, focusing on classrooms alone cannot fully capture students' experience. When asked about caring amongst students, nearly all the students gave an example of something that happened outside the classroom. Thus, the story of how school adults' use of power intersects with caring relations in the school as a whole is much more complex. As above, I will occasionally use terms in this chapter that appear polar (e.g., I will refer below to treaty schools and skirmish schools). My purpose in using these terms is simply to highlight contrasts in the starkest possible terms, even though these terms sometimes obscure the nuance at each school- and when possible, I draw attention to nuance and counter-cases as well.

Some of the most important parts of school life for both teachers and students take place in classrooms, but middle school students also experience school holistically. Furthermore, teachers and other school adults are increasingly expected to collaborate in order to improve professionally and bolster educational outcomes. The ways that school adults navigate their relationships with one another and the way that they influence school life outside of classrooms have considerable implications for the extent to which schools offer a caring and supportive environment for students. In the cases of Sun Valley Middle School and Cedarlane Academy, school adults often took very different approaches to these challenges.

In this section I present the emergent themes of how caring and power are negotiated at the organizational level, before directly analyzing the core category that emerged from these findings: loose/tight and tight/loose schools. Several broad themes emerged as important for how school organizations navigate challenges of caring and power. The first has to do with what decisions do and don't get made, who is involved in making them, and how they are sustained. At Cedarlane Academy, decisions are made collectively by staff members, and there is a high expectation of collaboration and fidelity when a decision is made in order to enmesh students in a consistent schooling experience. At Sun Valley Middle School, decisions tend to be made in smaller groups and there is generally a lower expectation of fidelity because teachers are given wider latitude within their own classrooms. On the same note, many decisions that are made with intentionality at Cedarlane Academy are simply let be at Sun Valley. A second theme has to do with consistency of beliefs about a positive schooling experience: at Cedarlane, there is an expectation that staff members broadly agree about the shape and tenor of caring at school, while there is considerably greater diversity at Sun Valley in how school adults think about and construct caring (and *where* they construct it). One upshot of this difference is that the school's have developed different capacities for addressing collective problems: power resides in more in the classroom at Sun Valley, and is less zealously applied to organizational challenges. These themes are explored in much greater depth below, and integrated in the explanation of loose/tight and tight/loose schools at the end the chapter.

Treaties and Skirmishes

In *The Shopping Mall High School* (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985), the operating metaphor that the authors use is treaties: teachers and students undertake implicit (and sometimes explicit) negotiations about what teachers can reasonably ask, and what students will do. For the authors of *The Shopping Mall High School*, treaties are most commonly the outcome of teachers and students negotiating to do the minimum acceptable amount of work (p. 108). The result of these treaties is generally some form of peaceful compliance.

Students at Sun Valley Middle School frequently described compliance as a major operating force in their school lives. For example, I had the following exchange with Emily:

> Jeff: It sounds like a lot of times you feel bored in class. What happens when your teacher gives you something that you think is boring or just not exciting?
> Emily: I just had to do it.
> Jeff: Why do you have to do it?
> Emily: Well, they're telling us we have to do it. If we don't, it's probably going to affect our grade.
> Jeff: What happens then if it's not just you, but it's everybody thinks it's boring?
> Emily: Some kids will start saying "Uh". We'll all groan, but I think we all do it. But there are some kids that will just not do it but then they'll get in trouble.

The next week, I had a similar exchange with another Sun Valley Student, Marissa. She described a similar feeling of frequently being bored in class, but like Emily

her response was just to push her way through the activity. A comment from a math teacher neatly encapsulates the ethos I saw in many classes at Sun Valley. Confronted with some groans, the teacher said "Ok let's stop the complaining, let's just do it!"

Neither Emily nor Marissa particularly disliked school: both seemed more or less satisfied with their school experience. Rather, they simply expected that for a fairly large portion of class time, they were going to be expected to do work that they found boring. Sonal expressed this idea as well, and saw lack of choice as a real problem.

> Sonal: Well, it depends on what you're doing in what class to make it fun. Most projects are really boring, unless you work with friends. If you work on a project like a cell lab in science, that's going to be fun. But with social studies, when we have to make a project like make a time line, that's not going to be fun.
> Jeff: Some classes have more fun projects than others?
> Sonal: Yes.
> Jeff: Do you feel at this school you have choices about what you want to do?
> Sonal: No, definitely not. There're really not choices. Most times, they take our choices away and our freedom away with it.

Some students couched the sometimes boring classes in terms of predictability. For example, Justice noted that even if he found the work boring, he could usually get it done very quickly, and then spend the rest of the time doing things he found more interesting.

This seemed to be most fundamental treaty agreement at Sun Valley Middle School: a division of time. Teachers agreed to do their best to make their time engaging, but failing that, students would need to comply until they were back on their own time. One example that made this point especially clearly took place in a 7th grade team

meeting. The teachers were discussing potential rewards to give to students during the last quarter of the year. One idea that quickly gained support was the "Leave a Minute Early" pass that would let students leave their last hour class a minute before the bell. One teacher remarked that students seemed like they were "caged up like animals at the end of the day." Another noted that for many students the pass would "feel like a half day off of school." Giving students back a piece of time was a powerful motivator.

Other instances bear out this idea as well. For example, the way teachers chose to use "Phoenix Feathers". As noted above, Sun Valley Middle School recently adopted a new mission: Authentic Learning in a Caring Environment. Phoenix Feathers were a reward mechanism to recognize especially *caring* behavior by students. Each quarter, the grade level teams would select a different aspect of caring to recognize. For the first quarter of the year, the 7th grade team selected "Be Prepared" and for the 3rd quarter they chose "On-task Behavior". The way students could demonstrate caring was to bring their materials to class and to work hard in class. Put slightly differently, the way students could demonstrate caring was by acting in ways that ensure that teachers' time will run smoothly.

One strategy employed by teachers at both schools (and, frankly, all teachers ever) was to call for quiet work time when they felt the class was being unproductive. Sometimes teachers would contrive to design a classroom activity that required that students remain quiet for some or all of the class. These activities controlled students voices by being fast-paced and engaging, but near the end one could sense a palpable pressure building in the room. At the end of one such activity, the teacher released the

pressure by asking “Was anyone tempted to talk and say something?” to which students responded with a drowning cacophony of shouts. Quiet, at Sun Valley Middle School, is a limited resource.

In a variety of ways, that simply isn’t true at Cedarlane Academy. Indeed, on first entering the school one is struck by how quiet and calm it feels. Like at Sun Valley Middle School, quiet is often used as a means of controlling a situation. However, unlike at Sun Valley Middle School, quiet tends to be used not as a way to get students to do more work, but as a way to keep classroom routines calm and simple.

Cedarlane Academy is not a treaty school. Teachers and the school’s Director all intimated that they exercise control over students’ behavior from the very beginning to the very end of the school day. Indeed, after students are greeted by teachers at the front door in the morning as they arrive from the bus, they deposit their belongings in their locker and go to homeroom. Homeroom time is generally semi-structured, as students eat breakfast and get organized for the day. From there, every transition between classes is structured and led (silently) by a teacher or other adult. Students collect and eat lunch in a classroom. At the beginning of the year, 7th and 8th grade students could get permission from a teacher to go to the bathroom, and then were expected to sign at the office both coming and going. However, after students abused this freedom, the school reinstituted teacher-monitored bathroom breaks for 7th and 8th graders (they already existed for the younger grades). There is, at Cedarlane Academy, no such thing as “student time” in the way that students at Sun Valley Middle School might mean it.

Cedarlane Academy might be described as a skirmish school. Teachers will not strike deals with students- they universally describe trying to hold students to very high behavioral and academic expectations, and there is simply no room in the school's highly controlled environment for a side deal. Instead, teachers employ a number of strategies designed to produce the conditions they expect in their classrooms and in the school as a whole. Several of these strategies- including detailed planning and schoolwide systems- are discussed below. Here, though, I discuss intentional quiet and calm to illustrate precisely what I mean by a skirmish school.

At one staff meeting in February, Hannah was trying to help teachers with transitions between classes and getting class off to a smooth start. At this point, the two most senior members of the middle school staff were on maternity leave. There were four substitute teachers, none of whom had been at the school more than six weeks, and the school's third science teacher for that year, Ms. June, as well as Ms. Betsy, the math teacher, who had been at the school since the beginning of the year. All of the teachers were still trying to understand the school's system and procedures.

Hannah turned to the idea of having a Dashboard slide full of pictures on the board to show students how to prepare to leave class, and what to do when they arrived. She wanted teachers to turn to this slide silently: "The power of silence is just… stunning. It's a less is more thing, the kids will cue to what is going." Dashboard slides are used by teachers throughout the school. Hannah described the ways in which they obviate the teacher from the need to answer questions: "I was in Mr. Pierre's class yesterday. I don't know how many kids came up to me and I just did this (points to

slide).” From there, the conversation turned toward general classroom management. A short while later Hannah remarked that one goal at Cedarlane Academy is that teachers are “only talking when teaching, not talking so much when you’re managing.” In this way, teachers at Cedarlane Academy participate in (silent) skirmishes. They are expected to enforce a high degree of compliance, and will not be party to a treaty. On the other hand, they will not participate in a pitched *battle royale.*

As implied by this, calm is used as a way to manage emotions (for both students and teachers). Counterintuitively, one effect of this approach to emotional management is that it lengthens the time over which conflicts are addressed. Numerous teachers described situations where they had a conflict with a student, but, because there is an expectation that conflicts will not erupt into shouting matches, they took time to allow tempers to cool. As Alyssa, the Physical Education teacher at Cedarlane Academy described it

> “I think that [the calm atmosphere] gives a moment for both teacher and student to let emotions settle little bit too, so that neither are- we're not up and neither is the student- that we can hopefully have that calm conversation… I know that there have been a couple of times that it has helped me, that I'm calmed by the time I can go talk to them, they might not be but I'm ready for that, and it's better they've already calmed down a little bit too just because they've had that time to de-escalate.”

However, producing this intentionally calm atmosphere amongst a group of passionate, vivacious 13 year olds is often a real challenge. The new teachers at Cedarlane Academy initially struggled with how to leverage the school’s procedures and

systems in a useful way. Because both students and the school as a whole were accustomed to operating with certain expectations for student conduct, this meant the new teachers faced frequent conflict- some of which went beyond the level of skirmishes- and there their classes were often, as Sahra emphasized, chaotic:

> That one's another picture of language arts. I don't like the way that the class is setup because it's chaotic and I don't get to learn that much. I feel like [the teacher] doesn't handle the class that much. Because I like my table group, but sometime the class is like chaotic and like sometimes it's hard for me to learn. And the picture just shows like how people have side conversations and it just shows how another way of how our classes are sometimes chaotic.

Figure 9: Sahra's Chaotic Language Arts Class

I will discuss the challenges posed by the steep learning curve at Cedarlane Academy below. What is important to understand here is that teachers at Sun Valley Middle School are empowered to cut their own deals, and often do, especially with respect to time. This means that the contours of caring in each classroom are also subject to negotiation: students expect significant differences from class to class. On the other hand, at Cedarlane Academy teachers *are not* empowered to cut their own deals, and students expect consistency from class to class- inconsistency is actually a source of discomfort for students, and teachers are often engaged in skirmishes designed to enforce consistent rules. Now, though, I turn to the different ways that school adults at each school approached solving problems.

Default Modes of Problem Solving: Collaboration and Independence

During my interview with Katia, the main office secretary at Sun Valley Middle School, she said that despite her very busy life at school, she doesn't spend very much time helping teachers. "The teachers here are very independent," she suggested, "Like making copies. A couple years ago, we had parent volunteers come in to try to help teachers with copying. It was a disaster. They want to do it themselves." This anecdote is an apt description of the professional culture at Sun Valley Middle School: teachers are independent, and want to do things for themselves. Furthermore, they expect to be independent, and to have freedom to do things in their own way. Teachers and other staff members expressed that this independence was frequently a strength, but also sometimes produced friction when teachers needed to collectively make decisions or solve problems.

At the most basic level, teachers' expectation of independence stems from the different expectations they have of students in their classroom. For example, my conversation with Thomas, a first-year teacher at Sun Valley, demonstrates just how quickly teachers assert their own ideas.

> Jeff: Do you think that teachers here have the same idea about students when they're in a classroom should behave in this way or--?
> Thomas: I think there are groups of teachers who certainly do, I certainly do not. I think mine are different because of also the approach of my class. I especially… I don't know if lightened up is… okay, to directly answer your question, I would say that there have been attempts to have common behavior expectations but that's one of those things where it's like, when the rubber hits the road it just doesn't make sense, because how I run my classroom is so incredibly different than how a teacher who's been teaching for 35 years and

> does a content-based class, runs their classroom, just like I like a lot more energy, I like my classroom to be loud, I like my kids to be moving.

For some teachers, like Thomas, this limited approach to common expectations is helpful because it provides freedom to run class in the way one sees as best. For other teachers, though, it produced a sense of isolation. For example, Adrianna, one of the Physical Education teachers, spoke about both figurative and literal isolation. She feels disconnected from colleagues, and therefore has limited peer resources to draw on, but Adrianna is also physically far removed from other classrooms:

> "The worst is like when there is like something stressful or emergency down there, it's like if I call the office and no one answers or it's like I don't – you know, like, there has never been anything like major injury. But it's like, 'I need help. What am I supposed to do?' Like, a kid just walks out of the gym. How do I get a hold of someone?"

Another outcome of the relatively limited collaboration is a sense that some teachers have that certain views get filtered out or distorted between, for example, grade level meetings and school site team meeting. One teacher said:

> "Like the way it is how one person brings it back and talks about how the conversation with the site team went could be totally different, how a different person who was at the same company could bring it back. I don't know if that makes sense. And then also I know some people feel like the person who's their representative, like if you go to your representative and say blah, blah, blah, blah about whatever, if that representative doesn't feel the same way as you when you go to the site team meeting or they are really pushing for your views or your opinions?"

Data suggested that trust amongst teachers at Sun Valley Middle School is *uneven.* Some teachers described this as a teaching staff that is somewhat factionalized- different groups of teachers with similar views have a high degree of trust, while those groups view other teachers with a low level mistrust. One way this showed up was in teachers making contingency plans if somebody failed to follow through.

> "Some people don't follow through with what they've said they're going to do and that creates, I don't know, tension I guess. I know in the math department everyone's going to follow through with what they said. I never question that. If it doesn't get done, there's a really good reason why I didn't get done or that's not even something I would even worry about. But on the seventh-grade team, we just had a field trip and everybody's got their assignments for what they're going to do and you kind of know or worry that somebody's not going to pull their weight or do their things. Then you plan on the side outside of there, 'Well let's do this in case this doesn't happen.'"

The most frequent planning and collaboration mechanism at Sun Valley Middle School is the grade level team meeting. Most of the core teachers at Sun Valley Middle School are arranged into grade level teams. One notable exception is the math team, which I discuss in more detail below. There was broad agreement among teachers that grade level teams were very effective at dealing with one type of challenge: academic and behavior issues on the part of indiviual students. For example, one teacher, who was actually talking about the relative infrequency of communication between teachers, said "We have team meetings where we do talk a little bit, but that's more business, you know, troubleshooting, dealing with kids." Another teacher described the collaboration this way:

> "Our interventions often work, a lot of times it's an ongoing thing where we have to try different strategies, you know, like we try one particular intervention and, you know, we all decide, 'Nah, this is not really working,' so we might as a team come up with another sort of intervention."

Teachers were much less rosy in their descriptions of collaboration to meet grade- or school-wide challenges. I saw three particular challenges play out over the team meetings I observed, and both asked about those challenges in interviews and watched how they played out in my observations. The first challenge was a transition to Google Classroom, which some teachers resisted because they felt it duplicated the functionality of Infinite Campus. The second situation, described briefly above, was switching from a Halloween celebration to a Thanksgiving celebration, which some teachers felt would be less fun for students. The final situation was a conflict over whether teachers could be compelled to substitute during their prep hours. Contractually, teachers could be required to substitute teach, but some teachers resisted efforts to generate a common contingency plan in their grade level meeting because of their frustration with the situation.

One teacher described the 7th grade teams approach to these situations this way: "You know we have some sort of motto—I don't remember the exact wording, but we know we strive for solutions, not harmony, in a meeting." In meetings, conflict situations tended to be resolved via a majority rules vote. However, based on interviews and observations, decisions made in meetings were implemented with widely varying fidelity. I might modify the teachers' statement to be, "in meetings we know we strive for an endpoint, not harmony." Teachers who disagreed with the decision tended to *comply-*

much in the same way students would work through boring or distasteful classroom activities.

In effect, teachers described efforts to recapture as much independence as possible. Unlike students, teachers could generally rely on being unmonitored in their own classrooms, and so disagreements could be compartmentalized- handled in a professional but emotionally inauthentic way. It was clear during my conversations with teachers that, whatever side of these issues they fell on, they held strong views that were not fully addressed through the grade level team.

The fairly individual approach to problem-solving at Sun Valley Middle School is different than the more collaborative approach at Cedarlane Academy. There is an expectation that teachers will work together to solve problems and "pitch in" to help out where needed. I was particularly struck, after encountering the resistance to substitute teaching during a prep hour, when I talked to an academic specialist at Cedarlane Academy who was dragooned into teaching science after the first science teacher quit.

> April: Yeah. You know I've always asked them, and I am allowed to say no. But I tend to - I like to help out where I can.
> Jeff: Yeah.
> April: So, I was asked to do science and I don't know a lot about science, but I am happy to help.

This attitude of being helpful to one's colleagues was widespread amongst teachers at Cedarlane Academy, but it was also tempered by the sense that everybody was so new and inexperienced that collaboration draw on fairly limited resources. Ashley, one of the long-term substitute teachers in Language Arts, related this:

> Ashley: But I – everyone here has been extremely helpful, I don't feel like intimidated to go to anyone for help, but at the same time it's hard because I think with a lot of new staff, they still don't know maybe the best way to help these students because we are all still getting to know them.

The relative inexperience of much of the teaching staff, both at the school and in the profession overall, placed considerable strain on the more experienced teachers. Early in the year, Clarissa, the experienced Humanities teacher, expressed the strain of helping out with so many new teachers:

> Clarissa: We're such a good school about pure collaboration, and really helping each other out, and we really do go out of our way to do things for the other teachers but that's been draining this year where you want to help-
> Jeff: Because you have, you've had multiple science teachers and you have a first-year math teacher, and just okay.
> Clarissa: Yes. So, we had new teachers and back to even, the two weeks prior to starting school during teacher work time, I spent all my focus getting them ready which didn't allow me to get myself ready and that just been the continuous thing, where myself and Jenna [the experienced Language Arts teacher], it's been a lot of administrative work. I honestly feel like I'm half administration, half teacher so then where does my work time come? So that's been part of it, and when you're not as prepared for the students to come in, things will never go as well. It has been tough and very draining. Then, you dedicate literally a week and then the teacher quits after a week and then you do it all over again. I get that they have lots of questions. I very much remember my first year and I had a lot of questions too.

This challenge of getting new teachers up to speed characterized much of the year at Cedarlane Academy. Indeed, the problem became even more acute after Ms. Clarissa and Ms. Jenna left on maternity leave.

However, Cedarlane's response to challenges was decidedly collaborative throughout the year. One role of the collaboration at Cedarlane Academy appears to be to try to give teachers access to the consistent caring relations detailed above. For less skilled or more inexperienced teachers, though, the collaboration and accompanying structural solutions to problem-solving can trap teachers in instrumental caring relations. I will explore this collaboration in greater depth in the subsequent (closely related) sections.

"Solving" vs. Ameliorating Problems: Standards of Success

One aspect of life at Cedarlane Academy related to collaboration amongst school adults is that problem-solving is highly collaborative as well. The school's teachers (especially the experienced ones) and Hannah, the School's Director, conveyed this to me in various ways. The basic ethos underlying the approach to challenges at Cedarlane Academy is that the challenges will be surmounted, or "solved" through common action. The school staff members at Cedarlane, and particularly Hannah, have a vision for how students should behave and learn while at school- and this is the standard against which reality is measured; these shared beliefs about are operationalized in the structures and schoolwide policies that permeate the school. This is the same reason that Cedarlane Academy is not a treaty school, but a skirmish school.

Consider, for example the arc of conversation at one staff meeting in January. Hannah remarked early in the meeting that she was "deeply disturbed by 7th and 8th grade students' inability to behave independently." Other teachers added "they have no integrity" and "they're not responsible enough." It was understood in the meeting that these are character flaws of the temporary variety: the expectation was that they would help students to behave independently, have integrity, and act responsibly. These missing traits in students are the problems to be solved; teachers at Cedarlane Academy are unexpected to have an unflappably asset-based understanding of student potential, and Hannah described this as the single most important belief they screen for in the school's hiring process.

Then, there was a discussion of some of the particular problems. Students were too rowdy during transitions between classes. They had been bothering other classes and/or making a mess in the bathroom. Hannah remarked, "we don't have a record of who is in the bathroom, they don't always sign in and out." Another teacher said, "we need to get kids to see why we have the expectations we do." A bit later, Hannah acknowledged that the students were wily in contriving to meet: "I'd be disappointed if they didn't figure out how to meet at the bathroom."

From here, the meeting turned to a discussion of solutions. Early on in this discussion, Hannah remarked "I just think it's not structured enough." Increasing the amount of structure in a situation is probably the single most common approach to problem-solving that I have observed in the past three years at Cedarlane Academy. A bit later Hannah proposed a bright line solution to one part of the bathroom problem: "We

need to keep track of who is doing what, and just saying you are not allowed to do that absolutely ever is the way to do that." After the bathroom monitoring situation was satisfactorily resolved, the staff members turned to transitions. It was decided that Mr. Calvin would come help in the middle school hallway during this time- adding more adults to a situation is probably the second most common approach to challenges at Cedarlane Academy. Finally, for good measure, the staff worked out a way to add in recess and reconfigure the academic daily schedule in a way that they hoped would boost student engagement by switching to shorter time blocks.

There were several striking things about this meeting. First was the sheer amount of changes that were made: changing a fairly involved bathroom pass procedure, how students would transition between classes and the *daily schedule* in a half hour meeting was a lot of action taken in a fairly short time span. Second, although there were clearly a fairly small number of students culpable in the majority of the mischief, no individual students were mentioned. Third, although the concerns of Hannah and the middle school team are about students' character (independent behavior, integrity, responsibility), the proposed solutions to the problems are either structural, or to monitor students more closely. Finally, it was clear in brief interviews afterwards that Hannah and the teachers emerged from that meeting feeling not just that the situation would improve, but that the problems would abate altogether.

As the year progressed, though, it became clear that some of the seemingly structural solutions did bear on the emotional dimensions of student learning. As noted above, the teachers with the most stable caring relations are those who did help students

process emotions and practice metacognition in their lessons. Furthermore, providing additional structures and personnel did seem to help students feel more supported. In the early spring, one additional change that the staff tried was to have two adults in every 7th grade class. Betsy, the math teacher, noted the impact of this change on her class:

> Especially because a lot of our kids when it gets hard that was the time that they were goofing off and that was the management issue. And so, now to have another body in here to help those kids that are stuck, it kind of keeps that from even happening for the most part.

Students were able to learn how to persevere better when they had more support.

In late April I interviewed Hannah about the changes at the school over the course of the year. It was clear from talking to teachers and students that everyone was in better spirits near the end of the year than at the beginning, and there were fewer skirmishes occurring in classrooms. Hannah explained:

> Hannah: The school has been far better since January. It's funny the staff is commenting on this too about how the school has a really good feel now. Things are going along very well.
> Jeff: What do you think the change is?
> Hannah: I think seventh and eighth grade really was wreaking havoc on the rest of the school, our first half of the year. In January, I started going down for every class and every transition. I check classes out every hour.
> Jeff: Every class, every hour?
> Hannah: Yes. Every period I walk around and tour all the classrooms. That made a big difference in terms of just catching things with new staff and with kids. It just calmed down the seventh and eighth-graders quite a bit. And I do think the double staffing just made a big difference because if there was a kid-- If somebody needs to talk to a kid or a kid has an issue, there's

> somebody there, they don't have to try to have the rest of the class do something else while they attended the kid.

She also suggested that a move toward a middle school-wide system of warnings and consequences had helped:

> We agreed to go to a system. So first, you just review expectations. Then you separate the kid, try to get them to change their behavior. If not, then it's an immediate parent phone call by that second teacher. If that doesn't work, it gets to me. There were a lot of phone calls the first couple weeks after January. Now, there's hardly any. I mean, really, there's hardly any parent phone calls happening like that.

The newer staff members occasionally expressed a bit of surprise at just how much had changed over the course of the year. The more experienced teachers were less surprised. I talked to Clarissa, the Humanities teacher, shortly before she left on maternity leave in January:

> Jeff: Have things been getting better?
> Clarissa: Absolutely. It always does.
> Jeff You feel like you have power to change the situation?
> Clarissa: Yes, I always know I have the power to make the situation better. I also know it's a long process, and sometimes, it's a really long process.

In a variety of ways, the situation at Sun Valley Middle School is different. Teachers at Sun Valley do believe that they can solve problems with individual students, but are less optimistic about more general problems. In part, teachers are simply less apt to see problems as truly collective. They are also, as noted above, more likely to seek an independent solution within their own classroom.

One notable counter-case is the math team. A math team meeting at Sun Valley Middle School feels dissimilar from a 7th grade team meeting, and from other team meetings I've sat on in past years. It feels, in fact, similar to a middle school team meeting at Cedarlane Academy. I asked Matthew about his impressions of the math team:

> Matthew: It's a problem-solving mentality. And being on other teams that's not the same mentality all the way through the school.
> Jeff: Okay. Like what are the differences? [laughs]
> Matthew: Being on other teams, it was often, "Here's a problem, here's a problem, here's a problem, here's a problem, here's a problem." "No solution." Then next time we meet, we still don't have a solution. We really probably haven't tried anything great and we've probably done something half ass.

In contrast:

> I think with the math team we all have, I think we have in mind the sense that there is a solution. Could fail the first time but we're going to at least try. "Okay, now it doesn't work, now we can try again."

This belief that problems can be solved through collaboration, and not simply amerliorated or dealt with through often individual action, considerably shaped relations and interactions between adults in the two schools.

These divergent approaches to problem-solving also reflect divergent beliefs about the role of school adults in using power and control to shape the school's climate. At Cedarlane Academy, school staff members believe that they should exert control broadly over school life in order to produce a consistent environment, not only in classrooms but throughout the school. Behavioral and curricular systems form the

architecture of this environment, and it is intended to generate a powerful toolkit for dealing with challenges, and thus shorten the path to authentically caring for students.

At Sun Valley Middle School, ameliorating problems is enough because most of the challenges with balancing care and control are handled in classrooms by individual teachers. Unlike at Cedarlane Academy, teachers' realm of control is limited to classrooms, and common spaces and times (discussed in more depth below) are not subject to teachers' authority. However, at both schools the approach to problem-solving produces trade-offs: there are advantages and disadvantages to each approach.

Approaches to Change and Steep Learning Curves

Although there are some advantages to the power produced by staff members at Cedarlane Academy working together to solve problems, there are considerable drawbacks as well, especially for staff members who are new to the school. The learning curve at Cedarlane Academy, both in terms of teaching and in schoolwide systems is incredibly steep.

Consider the case of the second science teacher at Cedarlane Academy. During my first observation of his class, when I came in during the middle of an activity, he came over to talk to me. I was a bit startled because, in two years of observing, no other teacher at Cedarlane Academy had ever had a conversation with me during class. Unfortunately, the class proved difficult to manage as it wore on. At one point the new teacher yelled, "you were given a simple instruction, that you should have your glue stick!" A bit later he remarked to the room, "I've never had a class destroy so many

things so quickly." When behavior did not improve, he interjected, "this is crazy, how little respect some of you have." Finally, near the end of the class, he said to the students, "just waiting for you to quiet down, waiting for you to let me do my job."

What is striking about this class is that most classroom management at Cedarlane Academy is non-verbal- teachers talk when they are teaching, not when they are managing. Early on in the year, I observed Becky, the first year math teacher. Becky made every effort to use ENVoY, the non-verbal management system, but her efforts slowly lost steam as the class wore on. Eventually, she too was exhorting students to behave differently, loudly, from the front of the room. Later on in the class, she began using ENVoY again, but spent so much of her time managing the class that students who needed help on the assignment became frustrated and began misbehaving. Mastering the classroom management that students are most attuned to respond to at Cedarlane Academy is not a trivial obstacle.

At one point, Hannah laid out the systems a new teacher needs to become accustomed to just to begin teaching at the school, and noted that there are still tools and systems to learn once one becomes proficient in the first few:

> Then, of course, we've got ENVoY, which is a non-verbal classroom management system which tries to de-escalate conflicts between adults and kids and so forth, so that's a big piece, the International Baccalaureate program is huge and we want teachers who are globally minded and who are interested in teaching kids to be good people and good global citizens. Those are the main things that we try to impress people on right from the start. We've got other things that we use, like academic conversations, thinking maps, we've got other types of academic things that people need to learn

> eventually and one of the reasons it's hard to bring new teachers in here is because there are so many things they need to know.

Hannah added that in the future, she is planning to find a way to double staff the classrooms of new teachers in order to reduce the burden involved in learning a new system. Jenna, an experienced teacher closely echoed this sentiment, but suggested it was because teachers must learn to change their thinking about what is their responsibility:

> Jenna:. It's an overwhelming school to work at, at the beginning.
> Jeff: Why do you say an overwhelming school to work in at the beginning?
> Jenna: Because there are so many details that you need to think about. There are so many more things that you're responsible for as a teacher here. From my experience at my previous school, when you teach eighth grade in another school -- I've also talked to my husband about this. He is an administrator. That bell rings and students are out the door. Really it was like, they stepped in my classroom, they were my responsibility. They left my classroom, they were not my responsibility. And then here see everything that goes on. Something's happened in the hallway, you take care of it.

New teachers may simply not realize the scope of expectations at Cedarlane Academy – they don't know what they don't know. For example, Betsy, the first year math teacher, related how they spent the morning of their fall staff development day:

> So, like transitions [between classes] for instance, I never would have taken three hours to figure them out with before, you know. I didn't think it was that big of – I mean I knew it was a problem, I didn't know if it could get better by sitting for that long and discussing them, but they knew that previously they spent a long time dealing with them and needed to deal with them again.

The procedures at Cedarlane Academy are very particular, and so a new teacher, in addition to learning new systems, must grapple with being interested in things that he or she may have not expected. The students, though, are accustomed to sharp transitions, both between classes and within class activities. For example, as one of the long-term substitute teachers in Humanities observed, “It’s like the little things when if we try to play a game, they get so riled up. It takes so long to transition between things that I feel like a lot of class time has been wasted if I don’t structure out exactly what they are supposed to do.” Teachers must literally learn the rules of the road.

Figure 10: Defensive Driving

The student who took this picture observed that “when you are walking in a line to the class you stop right here. The teachers give you directions and then you just stand here to make sure everybody’s walking right through the hallway. You have to show you care by being responsible and aware and showing you can do the right stuff.” Students do know the rules of the road, certainly better than new teachers. Yet, they still appear to expect their teachers to enforce them.

Indeed, an additional disadvantage that teachers- especially new teachers- face at Cedarlane Academy is that the students know each other very well. Grade-level class sizes at Cedarlane Academy are small (~50 students), and very few students leave the school, meaning that of the 50 or so students who begin as kindergartners, 90% are still around as 8th graders. Over the course of eight years going to school together, the students at Cedarlane Academy get to know one another quite well: teachers and other staff members often described their relations as familial- brothers and sisters or cousins. Hannah characterized the challenge.

> All the classes here are formed because the kids have known each other like the eighth graders have known each other for nine years so the new teacher coming in is the outsider. And so, they are like the kid in the class who is new to the class. This is the dynamic that people – because usually, you know, the teacher comes at the start of the day and it's like, 'Oh, let's learn all of these names,' while they all know each other.

In addition to needing to learn all of the systems of a fairly complex educational environment, teachers are easily spotted by students as outsiders. In addition to being culturally racially and ethnically different from students (mostly white, middle-class teachers and mostly poor, East African immigrant students), new teachers don't know the school rules or the people. For some teachers, quite aside from learning the systems, just dealing with this interpersonal dynamic is challenging. For example, Jenna, the Language Arts teacher, related to me that one of the ongoing challenges for the school's second science teacher (who left after about six weeks) was that he couldn't learn the students' names. This prevented his developing relationships with the students.

More experienced teachers often viewed the power of the systems in place at Cedarlane Academy with a sort of reverence- they are *systems of power* designed to produce students that fulfill the school's policies (Foucault, 1975). I interviewed the Physical Education teachers, Thomas and Alyssa, together. They acknowledged the steep learning curve, but then tripped over each other talking about the benefits of the system:

> Alyssa: They know exactly what they're supposed to do--
> Thomas: There's no mystery in it-- they know it's-
> Alyssa: They might sometimes push back but it's so easy--
> Thomas: We can always go back and say, "It's here."

Other teachers, though, acknowledged that even once one is very proficient in the school's systems, Cedarlane Academy can be an exhausting place to teach because of the expectation that teachers are monitoring and holding students accountable for so much. An exchange I had with Clarissa, the experienced Humanities teacher related this sense of being drained:

> Clarissa: This year's been an extremely challenging year, for a multitude of reasons. I'm up at 5:00 getting my kids ready and we're out the door by 6:30. I like to be here by, if I can, 6:40 to start my day, because it's really the only time of day that I feel like I can actually be productive. So, I work and try to prepare for the day, and to that and then the day, it's nonstop. You don't ever sit down.
> Jeff: Once students are here.
> Clarissa: Once students are here, it's nonstop, busy teaching and really focusing on the students. I don't see many teachers here being sidetracked with anything, you're pretty much focusing on the students. We are part of the transitions and so that comes into your work time. We monitor our own

> lunches, just because it goes better when we do it ourselves. The day goes really fast, but then when the kids leave, you're completely exhausted. [laughs]
> Jeff: You're pretty drained.
> Clarissa: I am very drained, especially this year.
> Jeff: When you said earlier, it's like you're really focused on the kids and some other places you get sidetracked. What did you mean by that?
> Clarissa: At the one previous school that I was at, it seemed more customary to maybe sit at your desk for a few minutes, or I don't know, pop on your computer and do something else, where here I feel like-- I don't do that. At my last school, I just felt like I saw that more than here, where here it's like, because of the expectations, you have to be 110% on your game to carry- we hold our students accountable for every action that they make, the work that they are to do and that's part of just what makes it challenging.

Clarissa, as noted above, is the same teacher who said "it always gets better." She has a great deal of confidence in her own, her colleagues', and the school's ability to meet and surmount challenges, but exhaustion is one of the consequences.

To summarize, the way that Cedarlane Academy has closely tied school adults together also creates challenges for producing a caring environment in school. Teachers' power at Cedarlane derives (in large part) from their knowledge and implementation from a variety of behavioral and instructional systems. New teachers, who don't know these systems, often face difficulty in exercising power and control in a way that is comprehensible to students. Even for more experienced teachers, the systems at the school can produce a great deal of fatigue to consistently implement: teachers are expected to perform a high degree of emotional labor of behalf of students (Hargreaves,

1998). However, teachers' collaboration is also a source of strength as teachers struggle through problem-solving.

In the next two sections, I address how caring and power intersect in some of the non-classroom spaces and times in the school. The main office, often viewed by students as a place from which power emanates, actually contains some of the few school staff members who are free to care in a more purely familial way. In each school's common spaces and times is where the schools; different approaches to balancing care and control at the organizational level can be most clearly seen, and where the school's climate with regard to care emerges most clearly outside the gaze of teacher's supervision.

The School Office and the Unique Position of Non-Instructional Staff

One striking distinction between the two schools is the nature of the space around the main office. Informally at least, school's main offices are spaces from which authority emanates- a teacher sending a student to the office is a referral to a "higher power." At the same time, the main offices at schools are also expected to be judicious- they serve as the arbiter for disputes not easily settled within classrooms. Consequently, making sense of the main office space is central to understanding how caring and power intersect at an organizational level.

The office space at Cedarlane Academy is very quiet. There are often a few students sitting around a table in the main desk area waiting to talk to Hannah because they've been referred by their teachers. These students are often silent, but they occasionally make furtive whispered conversation, while keeping a close eye on the door

to Hannah's office. It is the sort of space where spending time observing there makes one feel as though one should whisper.

Figure 11: The Waiting Table at Cedarlane Academy

One student, Mohamed took the above picture of the table where students wait to talk to Ms. Hannah. His comment reflected the sentiment of many of the students I talked to: "When you get in trouble you come right here and I want to say like I don't belong here because like – I don't know. I don't want to get in trouble and stuff." For most students at Cedarlane, the main office is not a place they would prefer to be.

One important exception is when students need actual bodily care: when they are sick or hurt. Several students at Cedarlane Academy described the help given to them by

Ms. Alanna, the main office secretary. It is clear from watching that in addition to Ms. Alanna's considerable duties keeping an eye on the front door and managing school functions, she is viewed as a source of warmth and support for students. Indeed, several times when a younger elementary student was having a meltdown or temper tantrum, she was the staff member who comforted them.

One exchange that revealed the important and peculiar role that the main office secretary at each school plays is when they said to me, within days of each other, some version of "sometimes you just have to be a mom." It became clear, in talking with and observing both women at work, that unlike teachers they had no real need to balance caring and power. Rather, they were able to care for students without hoping or asking for anything in exchange (beyond basic respect for the main office space). Because they have no official responsibilities related to students, the role both women took on was similar in some ways to a mother-role: they offered social and emotional support to students, and in some cases helped to defuse situations.

Figure 12: Main Office Staff at Sun Valley Middle School

For example, Emily took the above photo and said “I feel like I belong here because Katia [the main office secretary] will make me feel safe. Basically, there was medical issues with my mom. I could go in there if I'm needed to. I take a break. Katia will make me feel better.”

In contrast to the main office at Cedarlane Academy, the office at Sun Valley Middle School feels busy and vibrant. One reason is that many students seek out Katia

for various reasons- for example, some students elect to eat breakfast in the main office, which will be discussed further below. Multiple teachers and administrators pointed out that when a student is sent out of class to the office, Katia is almost always the first adult to interact with the student. It is clear that her manner of interacting sets the tone both for consequences in the school, and almost for the office space overall (from a student perspective. I asked Katia about how she approaches being the first person to talk to students:

> I just try to make it not so serious as my first thing. They'll come in and they'll have a pass that says either not allowed to return to class, or return in 10 minutes. Then I'll just have a conversation and it's not “Sit down, what happened? What did you do?” It's more almost even jokingly like, “What do you think you did?” Most of the times they say “I have no idea.” And so I'm like “[A bit sardonically] Really? You have no idea?” Make it almost even like we laugh about it a little bit- it's still serious they're still going to have to talk to Mr. K [the Dean of Students] but they're going to know that just because you get sent to the office doesn't mean everyone's angry now. I just diffuse the situation and then just distract them too like I'll say, "What did you do last night?" "How were your holidays?"

A bit later, I asked Katia later, what if the situation is serious, or too serious to lighten the mood? She said that she is often involved in that case as well: “A lot of times because I do have connections with so many kids when it is really serious, they'll bring me in as well. It really is-- when we call it Team Office, it really is truly just an amazing team”

The office space at both schools is clearly an important nexus of power and caring in the school for several reasons. First, it is, based on the mindset of both teachers and students, a place from which authority emanates (Waller, 1932). More importantly,

though, it can perform functions and solve problems that simply cannot be addressed in the classroom. The main office secretaries can care for students in ways that teachers cannot, whereas administrators have tools to support or discipline students not available in the classroom.

However, the way students (and adults) perceive and interact with this space is very different in the two schools. At Cedarlane Academy, the space seems infused with reverence, and a little fear (or at least apprehension). Students are generally quiet, but they also see Ms. Alanna as a source of support. The office space at Sun Valley Middle School is more vibrant, and most of the students I interviewed described strong relationships with Katia and members of the school leadership team. Students have respect for the main office space and staff. At Cedarlane Academy, where the structures and procedures in the school are designed to foreshorten the road to deeply caring about students, it is important that the authority of the school's main office not be seen as trifling. At Sun Valley Middle School, where the contours of teachers' caring and power relationships with students are much more variable than at Cedarlane Academy, the main office *is* a collaborative space. At Sun Valley, the office needs to have a greater variety of approaches available to it than at Cedarlane because there is a greater variety of reasons why students' needs are not being met in the classroom. These differences are also apparent in the way that Cedarlane Academy and Sun Valley Middle School approach common spaces and times.

The Problem of Common Spaces and Times

As noted in some detail above, students expected teachers to exercise some power in producing and regulating caring relations in classroom settings. However, students also think that common spaces (e.g., the bathroom, the lunchroom, hallways) and common times (e.g., passing time, lunch time) are subject to a very different set of rules and expectations. These times and spaces presented a challenge to caring relations for students and adults alike. For students, these times can be particularly challenging if they don't have a strong group of friends. In fact, one way that Katia, the main office secretary at Sun Valley Middle School tries to limit this problem is by having a "Breakfast Club" for new students before classes start in the morning, so that these students have a place to go. During this time she tries to help new students develop a strong peer group and get involved in school activities in order to help students feel connected to school.

One ongoing situation that brought the challenge of non-classroom times and spaces into particular sharp relief was the lunchroom at Sun Valley Middle School. Near the middle of the year, the boisterous of the lunchroom crossed a threshold such that the adults supervising it decided a change needed to be made. Both students and adults agreed that there was too much shouting, moving (sometimes running) around, and the occasional short-lived shoving match. The solution that the Dean of Students and other adults settled on was splitting up the lunchroom by boys and girls. Importantly, while students almost universally acknowledged that the lunchroom felt chaotic, they were also dissatisfied with this solution. My exchange with Justice captured this:

> Justice: The lunch room is not my favorite. It's not my favorite place.
> Jeff: Why is it not your favorite place?
> Justice: Because there are kids that are yelling, and they will fight.

Jeff: They'll fight?

Justice: Yes. They started separating us, all the boys. There can only be six people at a table. All the boys were towards the front. All the girls were towards the back on our side. I didn't really like that because most of the kids weren't really doing anything.

Jeff: You thought that they were trying to do something to everybody when it was just a few kids?

Justice: Yes. When it was a certain group of people.

Jeff: You felt they could have just dealt with that group?

Justice: Yes.

Jeff: Are kids still fighting?

Justice: Yes. I'm far away but I can still see it happening.

Jeff: Are most kids in the lunchroom nice and it's just a few, or a lot of kids really-

Justice: Yes. Most kids are pretty nice, but there are certain groups of kids that'll fight and not behave.

Figure 13: Justice's Picture of the Cafeteria Entrance

Like in classrooms, students have an expectation of fairness, and that students will not receive an unjust consequence for the behavior of others. The adults I spoke to about the lunchroom situation acknowledged that their solution did apply to students who had been eating lunch "respectfully" (as one teacher put it). Unlike in classroom situations, students did not necessarily think they had an approach that would help solve the problem, they simply felt that the remedy imposed upon them wasn't entirely fair. My exchange with Gabriela captures this sentiment.

> Gabriela: In the cafeteria, I guess things have happened there and sometimes I will feel safe and sometimes I won't. Recently we have been split up into tables of six girls and other six boys. I remember seeing all over Snapchat, all

the sixth graders would say that the school was being sexist for doing that. I don't really feel that way because when I was in there during their hour, the majority of girls would be sitting with their table and the guys would be at theirs. I didn't really see boy, girl table. I guess some of the people who are there can sometimes be really rude to you and sometimes can be nice.

Jeff: Some of the people like the other students?

Gabriela: It can be students, or it can be teachers. I guess it depends on what you do. Sometimes I will feel safe there, sometimes I won't.

Jeff: Can you tell me a little bit more about… they recently split up the tables so that boys couldn't sit with girls? Is that what it was?

Gabriela: Well, the person there who watches over us said that we were too noisy and too loud. I don't think really think that that was the case. I mean, of course it'd be one table that would be extremely loud. I would understand why she would want to do that but the rest of the tables, I guess, were fine with their group. I think it's more diverse in my grade because girls would sit with guys and guys would sit with girls, things like that. Recently everyone got split up and so six girls at a table, six guys so we would keep our indoor voices and all that.

Jeff: Okay, so they tried to make it so that you'd be quieter basically?

Gabriela: Yes.

Jeff: You felt like maybe there was one table that was the problem, right?

Gabriela: Yes. It was just one table too but it wasn't the whole cafeteria. Ever since then it has gotten other students upset to the point where they would name the school sexist and all that.

Figure 14: Gabriela's Cafeteria Picture

Despite this sense of unfairness on the part of students, and the sense that the lunchroom was not always a happy or safe place, most students indicated that they weren't likely to speak up. As Sonal put it, "Most of the times through personal experience, speaking your own opinion can be the worst thing to do. At this point, I'm just not even going to say it because people are just going to be like, "No, no", and then that would just make the

matter worse." Although students believed that the problems were limited to a fairly small group, they echoed the adults' view that the lunchroom often felt chaotic.

The hallways were also a source of tension for students at Sun Valley Middle School. Teachers and students had starkly different perceptions of hallway life. Most teachers and administrators said that they were frequently in the hallways during passing time, though some school adults suggested that while *they* were in the hallway, a good portion of their colleagues were not. Students, however, expressed that teachers mostly stayed in their classrooms or offices, and felt that the hallways were largely unmonitored. One repeated problem brought up by students is that other students were inattentive in the hallway- they didn't listen or couldn't hear their peers. The result was that students often knocked into each other- though two of the students I talked to noted that this proved a source of caring, because students would help clean up books and papers after a collision.

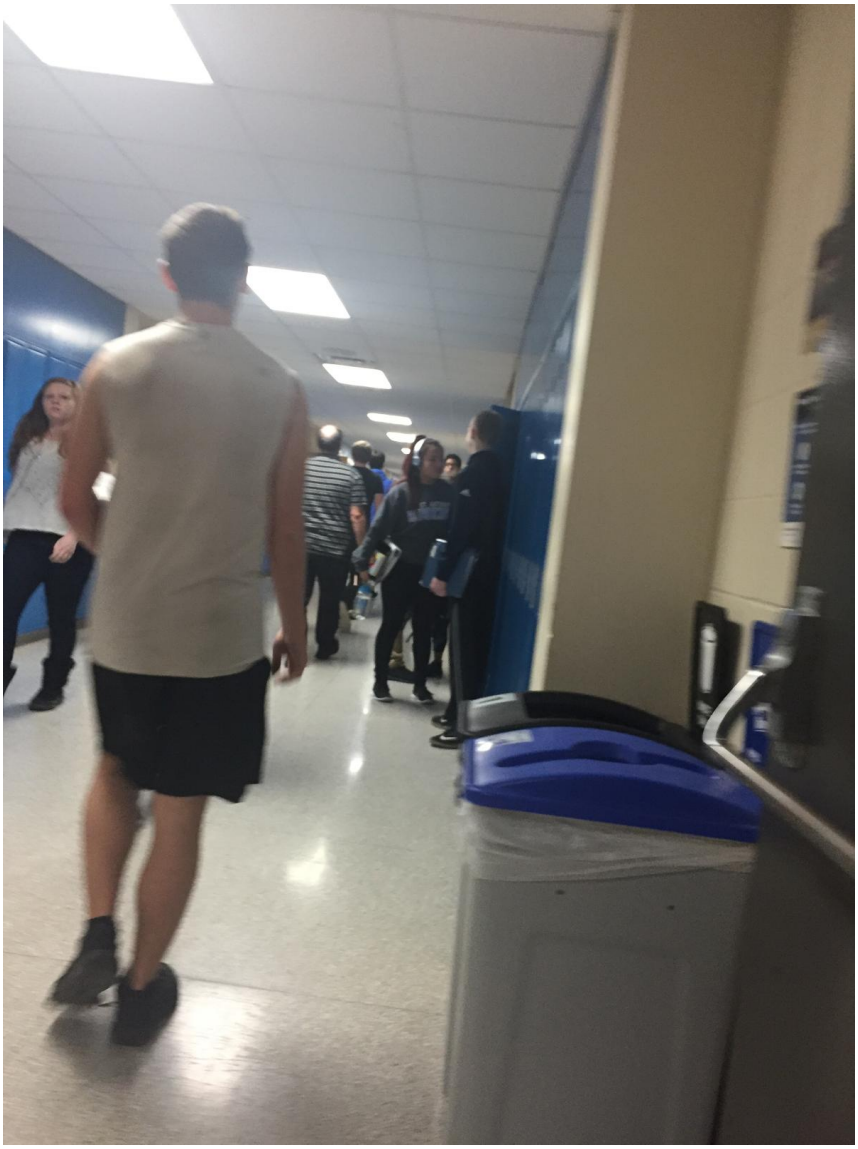
Figure 15: Justice's Picture of the Hallway

Half of the students I talked to mentioned that one hallway was particularly troublesome: the high school corridor. Because Sun Valley Middle School and Sun Valley High School share a building, migrating through the high school hallway was a source of anxiety for these students. As Mary suggested:

> "I was trying to get a picture without the high schoolers really seeing that I was taking pictures of them, but the high school hallways, I don't really feel

safe there, because a lot of them swear or they're shoving people. It's just really crowded in the hallways there. Some of them are making fun of the middle schoolers. Some of them are not always nice. To go to lunch and then gym and then choir band, you have to go through the high school hallways."

Figure 16: The Uncouth Brutes of Sun Valley High School



Thus far, I've focused on the common spaces and times at Sun Valley Middle School. The main reason for this is that at Cedarlane Academy there are very few

common spaces or common times. For example, there is no cafeteria. Furthermore, unlike at Sun Valley Middle School- which shares the building with Sun Valley High School- the middle grades at Cedarlane Academy share space with the elementary grades. Transitions between classes are (silently) led by teachers for the 7th and 8th graders as well as the younger students. Teachers take students to retrieve their lunch from the food preparation area, and then they return to their room to eat and clean up. Indeed, although lunch at Cedarlane Academy is tightly managed and monitored when compared with Sun Valley Middle School, teachers at Cedarlane Academy welcomed it as a time to be a bit more informal with students. For example, June, the third (and final) science teacher noted, “It's easy here because they come in for lunch, so you can play mom."Did you eat your yogurt?" "Are you going to go grab that cheese steak?" They like that.”

Even at Cedarlane Academy, though, there are cracks and crevices into which the environment that teachers carefully strive to orchestrate does not extend. One such area is the bathroom. Early in the year, some of the elementary teachers complained that middle school students were being irresponsible in the bathrooms. Students also described being made fun of in the bathroom as a problem. One student, Helena, often felt like an outsider at Cedarlane Academy because she did not speak either Somali or Arabic fluently. Her sense of being an outsider was particularly acute in and around the bathrooms.

> Helena: I took this picture because whenever I go to the bathroom people like laugh at me.
> Jeff: Why is that?
> Helena: I don’t know.
> Jeff: That’s not very nice. Like people in your grade?
> Helena: No, any kind of grade.

Jeff: In what?

Helena: Any kind of grade except like kindergarten through maybe second.

Figure 17: Helena's Picture of the Bathroom

A number of students mentioned the bathrooms as a site for apprehension at Sun Valley Middle School as well:

Jeff: You feel unsafe like that sometimes, even in the bathrooms at school?

Sonal: Yes, sometimes. I don't feel like that at home because I know it's just something that I don't feel at home. At school, there's a bunch of people in here, and I don't know half of those people. You never know what could happen. Someone could just barge in and do anything.

Figure 18: Sonal's Picture of the Bathroom

Even though the 7th graders at each school felt that there were occasionally problems and injustices in classrooms, there was often uncertainty and anxiety in situations where teachers would not or could not exert power.

One final example that highlights the distinction between the schools is that of homeroom time at Cedarlane Academy. In an important way, homeroom time *is* common time at Cedarlane Academy because of its comparative lack of structure. The result is that

homeroom time occasionally became chaotic, leading Hannah to assign additional personnel in each classroom to help manage the time. I asked June what homeroom time is like for her.

> June: Okay, very good. Really busy. They come in for breakfast, so I didn't realize that homeroom was an hour in the morning and then almost an hour in the afternoon where you're getting them ready and they're packing up. That's a little bit of a challenge.
> Jeff: The homeroom?
> June: Right. Because there's not-- I don't really have a lesson to teach and there's so many different things that you need to get done
> Jeff: Yes, so finding the structure in that time?
> June: Right, getting those little guys organized. In the morning it's fine because they eat breakfast and they're mellow, but by the afternoon they're wound up pretty tight. Our principal has allowed me to have an assistant teacher who comes in for 7th grade in the afternoon and it makes all the difference.

In homeroom time there is a much greater variety of tasks students might be engaged in, and consequently less class-wide structure. As is common at Cedarlane Academy, the solution is to assign additional personnel to create more support (and thus more structure).

At both schools, the times when adult power is not present, or ambiguous, often are a source of anxiety for students. Understanding how each school approaches these times and spaces is crucial to understanding how the schools approach caring for students with respect to power because it reveals school adults' underlying beliefs about where power should and should not be exercised. At Cedarlane Academy, the overlying presumption is that adult power should be exercised widely, and that times like lunch and

transition between classes should subject students to the same expectations as in the classroom. Students are best cared for, in this logic, when adults can mediate their interactions at all times in school. At Sun Valley Middle School, power and caring both happen most often within classrooms, and when power needs to be exerted outside of classrooms it is most frequently in the service of order rather than care. In the next section, I explore the politics of how adults share and/or appropriate each other's power at each school.

Appropriating and Repurposing Power: (Don't) Lean on Me

Staff members at the two schools had very different ways of thinking about how power in classrooms or in school-wide decisions should or could be shared. At Sun Valley Middle School, where teachers were largely independent of one another, the idea of leveraging another teacher's positional or relational power in a conflict with students was rarely expressed. Teachers might work on common student concerns in a grade level team meeting, but the problem was ultimately arbitrated by individual teachers, in individual classrooms. The idea of leaning on another teacher's power in the moment was never expressed. Rules are diffuse and varied at Sun Valley Middle School, and so negotiations happened within individual classrooms.

This is in stark contrast to Cedarlane Academy, where expectations are expected to be uniform. Consequently, teachers often felt that they needed to co-opt the power of Hannah, the school's Director, of that of other teachers in order to enforce an expectation. This need was particularly acute for the long-term substitutes who took over for the

experienced teachers on maternity leave. One way the teachers did this was by wielding the reputation of the departed teacher to appeal to students' respect for them. However, at other times teachers sense that they need a more immediate source of authority. Take this exchange with Ashley, a long-term substitute in the Language Arts class:

> Ashley: Like for example if there is a group of girls and they are all like, 'We all need to go to the bathroom to wash for prayer,' and I am like, 'Are you allowed to do that?' 'Yeah, Ms. June let's us do it.' 'Well, let me – let's walk down to Ms. Helen's office and I'll ask her. Let's – I'll call Ms. Helen and check with her.' And then usually when you say that they'll be like, 'Oh, no.'
> Jeff: Okay.
> Ashley: So, a lot of times I'll – if a student says something like, 'Oh, I am allowed to be on YouTube,' and I am like, 'All right, I'll just call Ms. Helen and ask her.' And they know that that's real. So, unfortunately, she gets used a lot probably. I kind of use her as my source of authority, but yeah, I don't know.

At Cedarlane Academy, there is no question that when faced with a schoolwide expectation or standard of behavior, teachers who are unsure or unable to produce the desired outcome will appeal to a higher authority. Occasionally this presented a problem. As Clarissa, the experienced Humanities teacher related:

> That's also been one of the challenges I'm often having, things that are happening in other areas or classes that aren't going really well with my homeroom, and then having to address and discuss in here. Sometimes I feel like that's unfair because really, for the most part, they've been doing a really good job with me. I've been having a good experience, something like that. Sometimes, hurts our relationship where I'm reprimanding them for things that are happening in gym, or in Science, or in Math. That's tough sometimes.

> I've had that conversation with Hannah There's been many times where they've earned a reward but I have to push it off or take it away because of something somewhere else.

Clarissa is expressing that one challenge of having uniform schoolwide expectations is that it can place strain on the positional and relational power of the most skilled (or authoritative) staff members because they sometimes end up lending power to other staff members in ways that may erode their own relationships or credibility.

There is some sense that power must be protected and/or judiciously employed at Sun Valley Middle School as well, especially amongst members of the administration. For example, according to Jack, the Dean of Students, the change in policy that more behavior problems with students should be handled in the classroom stemmed partly from the sense that consequences from the office were not always effective, but also from a sense that if the Dean of Students' office becomes a revolving door for some students it becomes ineffective.

One final aspect of appropriating power at Sun Valley Middle School bears mention. As noted above, around half of the teachers felt that their influence in schoolwide decision-making was waning and that being separated into smaller groups was dividing and weakening their voice. However, many of these same teachers also wished that the administration would issue *more* schoolwide edicts about certain student behaviors. One example that came up in nearly every teacher interview was that of chewing gum. Some teachers wanted school administrators to ban chewing gum, while others (and the school administrators themselves) wanted the rule to be decided by

individual teachers. In addition to limits on the way that teachers can appropriate and repurpose other staff members' power with regard to students, there are also differences in the way that each school approaches decisions with school-wide implications.

How decisions are made amongst school adults has important implications for power relations at the schools. At Sun Valley Middle School, teachers sometimes wished they had more ways to access administrative power in order to eliminate their need to make decisions or distinctions, whereas administrators often sought to guard that power against being used for issues they found trivial. Because there is a much greater variety of views about what it means to care for students at Sun Valley, the power commitments that teachers are willing to make is more conservative than at Cedarlane Academy. At Cedarlane Academy, though, teachers are expected to have unfettered access to one another's power, which means that the burden of enforcing certain behavioral expectations falls more heavily on teachers with more stable preexisting caring relations: the emotional labor of care is shared more unevenly amongst teachers.

Elevation and Relegation of Decision-making

Allison, the principal, and Kate, the Academic Dean, also a hope that teachers would exercise their own power in a robust way, particularly with regard to instructional tasks and the school's vision. Allison said:

> You have your own power. I don't like this idea that somehow, I may be the one who grants, right? I don't know if it's a little bit of an idea in which just because I have a position of power does not mean I am one to give power or to take power. I just think that it is truly important for me to think about that.

> I want teachers to not feel as if they are not a leader because I have not given them a formal position to lead--or given them something to do that.

At certain times, though, Allison does want power:

> When I'm in a position as a decision-maker I want to be powerful, have my power when I manage. I want to be the one who decides the calendar. I want to be the one who decides when I'm going to go in, and if I have to follow due process and your HR observations and things are a problem, I'm going to power my way through that.

Allison distinguished this power to *manage* from *leadership:* "When it comes to how do we set a vision, how do we go about doing this work in a way that it gets kids to be above all? I'm going to lead there and that has nothing to do with power." Understanding this distinction is crucial to understanding the power structure at Sun Valley Middle School. Allison wants power to make certain management decisions (i.e., the calendar) that she sees as tangential to the core mission of the school. She also wants power to discharge the statutory functions of her job (i.e., teacher evaluation). However, she wants teachers and other staff members to act as partners in helping to design and execute the vision of the school, which she sees as the core mission.

About half the teachers I interviewed saw this as a change from the past, and a removal of some of the power to help shape decisions about the school that they had previously been a part of. At times teachers expressed a wish to have more decision-making in school-wide celebrations. For example, a few teachers mentioned that the school's administration had ended the Halloween Costume contest and Ugly Holiday

Sweater contest out of concern for excluding students who did not celebrate these holidays. As one teacher noted,

> "I feel like you don't need to restrict one group of people in order to support another group of people. I felt almost like we were pretending the world didn't celebrate Halloween, but many people do in our community still. We're basically taking away what they celebrate in order to be respectful of people that don't and I feel like why don't we just celebrate other things too or why don't we do something else different rather than celebrate less. I feel like we're going kind of backwards."

Other issues that teachers mentioned where they felt they used to have more input were the conference schedule- the school moved from conferences to "office hours" for equity reasons, in order to create a broader set of possible times for parents to come in, as well as changes to the budget. Allison, the school's principal, reflected that some of these changes removed the illusion of input, rather than actual input:

> People would come in and tell me like, "Well, when we did budget discussions before, the principal would bring us in, and she talked to us about all these different-- We gave options. We talked about it. We all had to value our opinions, were taken into account, whatever." When I met with the previous principal, she's like "Here's the same list I bring to the school board every year for budget cuts."

About half the teachers I talked to expressed some discomfort with some of the decision-making structures at Sun Valley Middle School as well. In the past, staff members felt like important decisions were often made in all-staff meetings. The idea that all-staff

meetings offered a forum for teacher voice on important topics was expressed by several teachers. One noted:

> I would probably go back to… more staff meetings in which we have a dialogue about philosophical issues or topics. Instead our staff meetings right now they're dealing with racial equity stuff which is great but in the past, they've been just-- It's all staff development which is great, but on the other hand we need some professional dialogue regarding things that are happening on site that everybody can have a voice.

Another teacher was even more forceful. This teacher was especially concerned about the review by a local equity focused education organization, discussed above, which found a lack of rigor at Sun Valley.

> Teacher: We don't have any mechanism for all staff to really have any dialogue-- And even our staff meetings now are optional. Some of us are going because we picked the to go to staff meetings, if you pick that then you're just doing an independent book study and you don't go at all. There's no mechanism which we can talk as a whole staff about any issue which is a problem I think, so I would solve it by having staff meetings back.
> Jeff: Do you think that would help solve the polarization problem too?
> Teacher: Yes, because people would have more of a voice. I think in small groups if you had a question about what does Rigor look like, and we're all talking about it then sharing back what we came up with, that or under budget cuts or whatever the issue is, I think then people feel that they have a voice and it's being represented.

Everybody agrees that at Sun Valley Middle School, the decision-making structures are more diffuse than in the past. Allison, the principal, and Kate, the Academic Dean, expressed that they felt staff meetings were often a waste of time (and

that teachers had indicated this to them in surveys), because they didn't feel strongly about many of the issues discussed. The administrative team, and about half of the teachers I talked to preferred the new decision making structures of having small committees to work on specific issues and a Site Team to gather feedback from grade-level teams and then work together to make a decision. Other teachers worried that the Site Team did not always convey the full range of views.

One aspect of the diffusion of decision-making power- and the general habit of working with small groups instead of the whole staff- made several teachers particularly uncomfortable; namely, that different groups didn't always receive the same approach or development. Some teachers expressed concerns about favoritism: that school administrators were giving certain messages to preferred groups. For other teachers, it simply seemed uncaring to treat them differently. Both Allison and Kate pushed back against this notion. Allison said, with respect to racial euity professional development in particular,

> One of the issues that we have is on staff is that people will say, "well, why don't we all get to hear the same message?" You're not all in the same place. They don't like it, but that's really culturally in schools, all teachers are the same. To say you're not-- and I'm not going to treat you the same because you're not the same is how I want you to treat kid children by the way. I want you to meet kids where they're at. I'm going to meet you where you're at. If I start doing what I'm doing with math with you, you're not there yet. We need a scaffold that up for you. That's been hard.

Kate closely echoed this sentiment when she said, "With some things I'm not going to say it in the large group because people are in different places and to think that people will

hear that all the same—it's not going to be heard, it's got to be explained differently to different people." For some teachers, the different messages seemed to indicate different levels of support for their teaching and classes, while to the school's administration the different messages were intended to help all teachers reach the same goals in their own way and time.

The staff members at Cedarlane Academy took a very different approach to schoolwide decision-making. The situation at Cedarlane Academy is both simpler and more complex than that at Sun Valley Middle School. It is simple because in important ways, one might simply say than Hannah (the school's Director) makes the schoolwide decisions. However, teachers at Cedarlane Academy are also expected to be active participants in both the definition and resolution of schoolwide issues.

Unlike at Sun Valley Middle School, where some decisions may be made at the grade level, while others are made in committees or by administrative fiat, the decision-making process at Cedarlane Academy, at least for the middle school, occurred almost entirely in middle school team meetings. Hannah's expectation is that teachers will proactively seek solutions to academic and behavioral problems and propose solutions (e.g., new curricular materials, a changed transition schedule, an engaging field trip). Teachers at Cedarlane Academy, even the very new ones, universally described feeling both empowered and expected to ask Hannah for what they needed. Even if she disagreed or couldn't meet their request, they felt able to reach a good compromise.

Thus, decision-making power was more centralized at Cedarlane Academy, but teachers at Cedarlane Academy also seemed to have a more widespread sense of

ownership over influencing important decisions. In fact, Allison, the Principal at Sun Valley Middle School, had a sense of the distinction between her own ability to make decisions and the power to produce outcomes. She suggested, "If I am the decision maker then for sure Kate [the Academic Dean], Katia [the main office secretary], and Jack [the Dean of Students] have the most power." At Cedarlane Academy, Hannah has the power to make decisions, but hopes and expects that the solutions (and will to carry them out) will come from teachers. Administrators at Sun Valley Middle School have the same hope, but there is less agreement at Sun Valley about what decisions matter most (and should be made collaboratively), and which should be made by fiat.

These arrangements about decision-making are again reflective of the greater diversity in views about how best to care for students (and meet their needs) in the two schools. At Cedarlane Academy, although Hannah has decision-making power, the effectiveness of the school rests on teachers collaborating to carry out those decisions. At Sun Valley Middle School, some teachers felt that not having a schoolwide forum, and indeed, giving different sorts of professional development to different staff members, was uncaring, whereas the school's administration saw it is equitable (if not equal) and a way to give teachers an opportunity to focus more fully on teaching. In the following section I draw each of the distinctions detailed above together and describe a theoretical spectrum of approaches to navigating care and control at an organizational level.

Loose/Tight and Tight/Loose Schools

Although there are some similarities at the organizational level between Cedarlane Academy and Sun Valley Middle School, it is clear that the two schools generally approach the intersection of caring and power in very different ways. I want to emphasize that *neither school is an extreme case,* but that the ways that power is and is not used to create a caring environment in each school (and where that power is applied) suggests the broad outlines of two distinct approaches to school organization. I will refer to these as *loose/tight* and *tight/loose* schools.

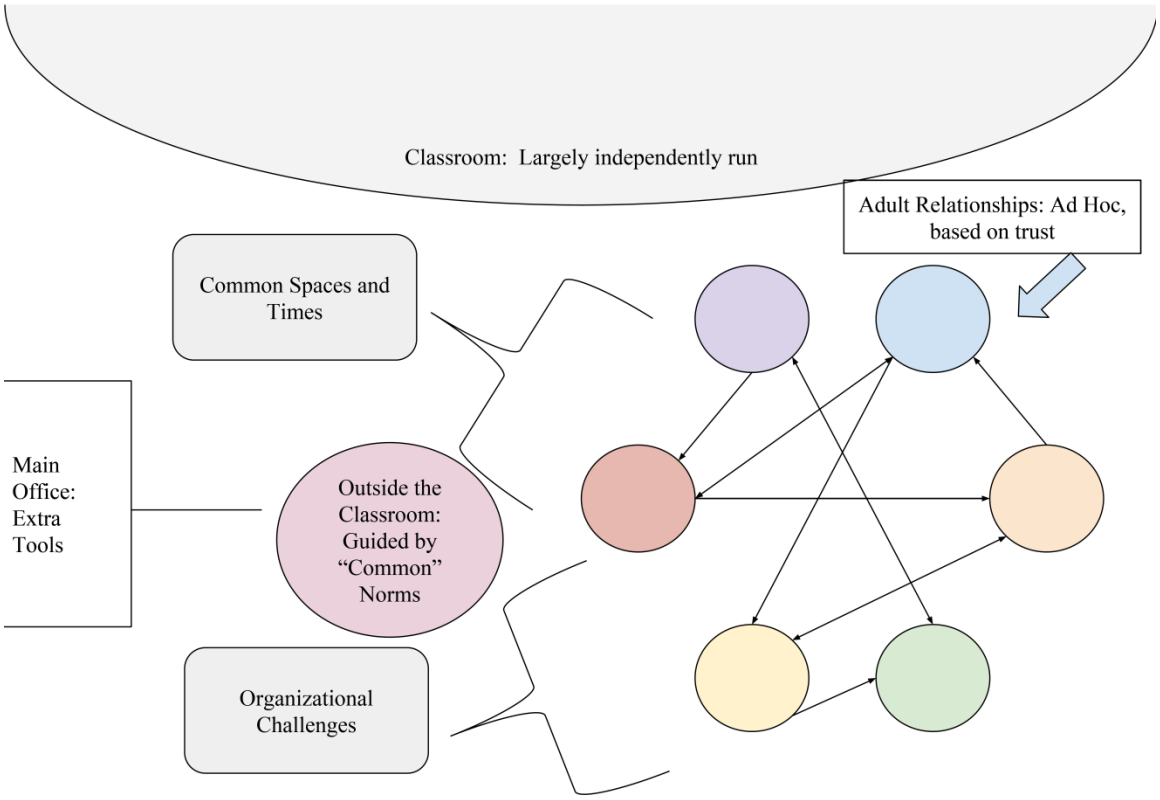
I will explain these ideas in detail below, but in general, the two school types refer to where power in the school is most exerted. In a *loose/tight* school, power matters less in common spaces and relationships among school adults, and more in each teacher's (relatively independent) classroom. Problems, and especially large organizational challenges, are less likely to have common solutions and more likely to be arbitrated individually or in small groups. Power outside the classroom is *loose.* This arrangement has important implications for caring. Inside the classroom, power is *tight,* meaning that teachers have an expectation of independence and of a certain sort of control in their classroom space.

In a *tight/loose* school, power matters a great deal in common spaces and relationships amongst adults. Indeed, most problems in *tight/loose* schools are elevated to become common problems even if they originate in a single classroom. Power in common spaces and between adults is *tight.* Expectations are common and structure in student behavior matters a great deal. Once these (often difficult to reach) expectations

are satisfied, though, power within classrooms can be somewhat loose because teaching and learning are driven by a comprehensive vision.

Figure 19, below, depicts a *loose/tight* school.

Figure 19: Loose/Tight Schools



In the present study, Sun Valley Middle School is closest to a loose/tight school. In a loose tight school, relationships amongst school adults are largely ad hoc. In some cases there may be reciprocal relationships, but adults may also rely on somebody else in a limited or transactional way. Problems are often solved individually or within small groups.

The micropolitics at loose/tight schools may sometimes be characterized by what Hargreaves (1991) described as "contrived collegiality," where collaboration is routine and predictable rather than dynamic (Ball, 1980; Blase, 1991a). At Sun Valley Middle School, disagreements in team meetings were often glossed by the language of professionalism, and undergirded by teachers' understanding that they would be able to, mostly, be independent in their own classroom. Recall the teacher, quoted above, who said that in staff meetings teachers focus on "solutions, not harmony." One way that conflict amongst school adults is managed is by limiting the scope of challenges to be addressed.

Teachers at Sun Valley tended to focus on small, specific problems in team meetings, such as particular students. The main way that school adults exercised power was not with each other, but within their own classrooms and spheres of influence. One way this can be understood is by looking at a counter-case. The math team at Sun Valley Middle School was more effective at addressing somewhat bigger problems for a variety of reasons. One is the skill of the team leader in inculcating a belief amongst other teachers that they have the ability to solve problems, given enough time. Another was the trust built over sustained interactions. Perhaps most importantly, though, the math team was in a better position to address one another's *teaching*- they are better able to support one another in the classroom, which is where most power resides at Sun Valley. Allison's (Sun Valley's Principal) observation that for her, power is separate from decision-making is also telling here. She identified the other administrators at the school at having the

most power to affect change, which aligns with the idea that building sustained trusting relationships is crucial to impacting organizational problems in a loose/tight school.

In contrast to tight/loose schools (discussed below), loose tight schools allow for relatively more common space and time (e.g., the lunchroom, passing times). These spaces, as well as the general tenor of interactions outside the classroom, appear to be governed largely by unstated message about how one should act- "common" norms. These messages seem to come from history/tradition, broader social discourses about schooling, and beliefs about the community (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu, 1986). Frequently this appears to work adequately, but it presents challenges when taken-for-granted expectations are weakly settled in practice.

For example, the gender segregation of the lunchroom reveals the ways that "common" norms may not be common. At some point, the lunchroom became too loud and chaotic for the supervising adults, and unpleasant for many students as well. The adult solution was to use power to change the social arrangement of students. However many students saw this as uncaring, both because it felt unfair and because it encroached on time the student's understood as theirs. It felt, to students, a little bit chaotically arbitrary. At the same time, students did not feel they were able to speak up in order to change the situation. Consequently, although there was a clear exercise of power, there was no conflict.

Allowing considerable spaces and times in the school to be governed by taken-for-granted notions of how to feel and act thus occasionally presents problems for loose/tight schools, and may present frequent problems for some students. In some ways,

post-colonial theory may be applicable here: students are subjected to power structures that they do not feel legitimately able to question (Foucault, 1972; Heilig, Khalifa, Tillman, 2014; Said, 1978). The power afforded these norms by history and social acceptance, combined with the relatively loose ties between adults means that changes to the prevailing tenor of the school outside of the classroom are likely to be slow and difficult (e.g., the new focus on equity at Sun Valley).

Loose/tight schools are treaty schools (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985). Certainly teachers operating independently sign treaties within their classrooms with students. Importantly though, *relations amongst adults* are governed by treaties as well. These treaties help delimit how collaborative adults will be in addressing problems and/or making collective change. They also help to define what decisions will be made individually, the extent to which problems need to be "solved" (rather than ameliorated), and how much adults can rely on each other's power in certain situations.

In loose/tight schools, it is unsurprising (as was the case at Sun Valley), that the main office staff (and especially Katia, the main office secretary) would play an important role. As noted above, the main office secretary is one of the few staff members who has no real need to balance caring and power because she does not have any need to induce students to do anything. In a school where addressing extra-classroom issues is sometimes difficult, Katia plays an important role, especially for students who might otherwise experience profound opportunity gaps. One simple example is that Katia coordinates funds to ensure that all students can play sports, even if their families can't afford the fee. This involves not merely bookkeeping, but finding the students in need

and also ensuring that (boys, in particular) have the money to buy a shirt and tie to wear on game days. This "extra" capacity is essential to addressing problems that common norms and beliefs (e.g., in this case, the affluence of the community) cannot solve.

A loose/tight power structure intersects with caring in a number of ways. One way, especially when compared to tight/loose schools, is that there is considerably more variance in the strength and manner of caring relations, both between teacher and student and between school adults (Noddings 2005; 2006; 2013). Because teachers have a high degree of discretion in how they manage their classrooms, and there are few common schoolwide expectations, the stability/variability of caring relations in individual classrooms varies widely. Students appear accustomed to this, and have little trouble navigating the expressions of caring offered teachers of widely varying styles.

For adults, too, caring relationships vary widely. As will be discussed in greater detail below, caring relations amongst adults in tight/loose schools are both more widespread and more structured than in loose/tight schools. In loose/tight schools, caring relationships are relatively more limited, but also more organic. Uncaring relationships, or relationships where caring is delimited (by treaty) are often managed via professional norms.

This wide range of acceptable types of caring relationships (both student/teacher and amongst adults) means that the emotional investments of teachers (Zembylas, 2003). All teachers engage in the emotional labor of caring (Hargreaves, 1998), but at loose/tight schools, like other aspects of life in classrooms, the extent of the labor is largely at the teacher's discretion. At the same time, the diverse ways that teachers at loose/tight

schools are permitted to engage in the emotional labor of caring may allow for greater authenticity than is possible at tight/loose schools.

Because conduct outside of classrooms is largely governed by taken-for-granted "common" norms, loose/tight schools may face considerable barriers in responding to change or grappling with difference, particularly outside the classroom. Valenzuela (1999) found that Mexican-American students often experienced a sense of alienation with respect to teachers' efforts to care. Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus (2006) suggest a form of critical care that privileges "the funds of knowledge that students and their respective communities bring to school" (p. 409). At loose/tight schools, teachers have wide discretion to take this step (or not) within their classroom. However, the fairly weak levers for disrupting the prevailing norms that arise from social discourse, history, and implicit beliefs about the school and community *outside* the classroom may be a barrier to equity regardless of what happens inside the classroom.

Finally, loose/tight schools may have limited capacity to deal with the organizational aspects of caring highlighted by Tronto (2010). The students I spoke to did not experience school as a set of discrete class periods, but holistically, as a complex social experience. Teachers at Sun Valley certainly cared about their students' lives outside their classroom, but they exerted most of their power and concern on students lives *in* their classroom. The limited collective ability to address issues of power in common spaces and times sometimes led to students feeling apprehension during these times. Furthermore, it was often left to main office personnel (Katia, the main office secretary, or Jack, the Dean of Students) to address the *particular* needs of students. The

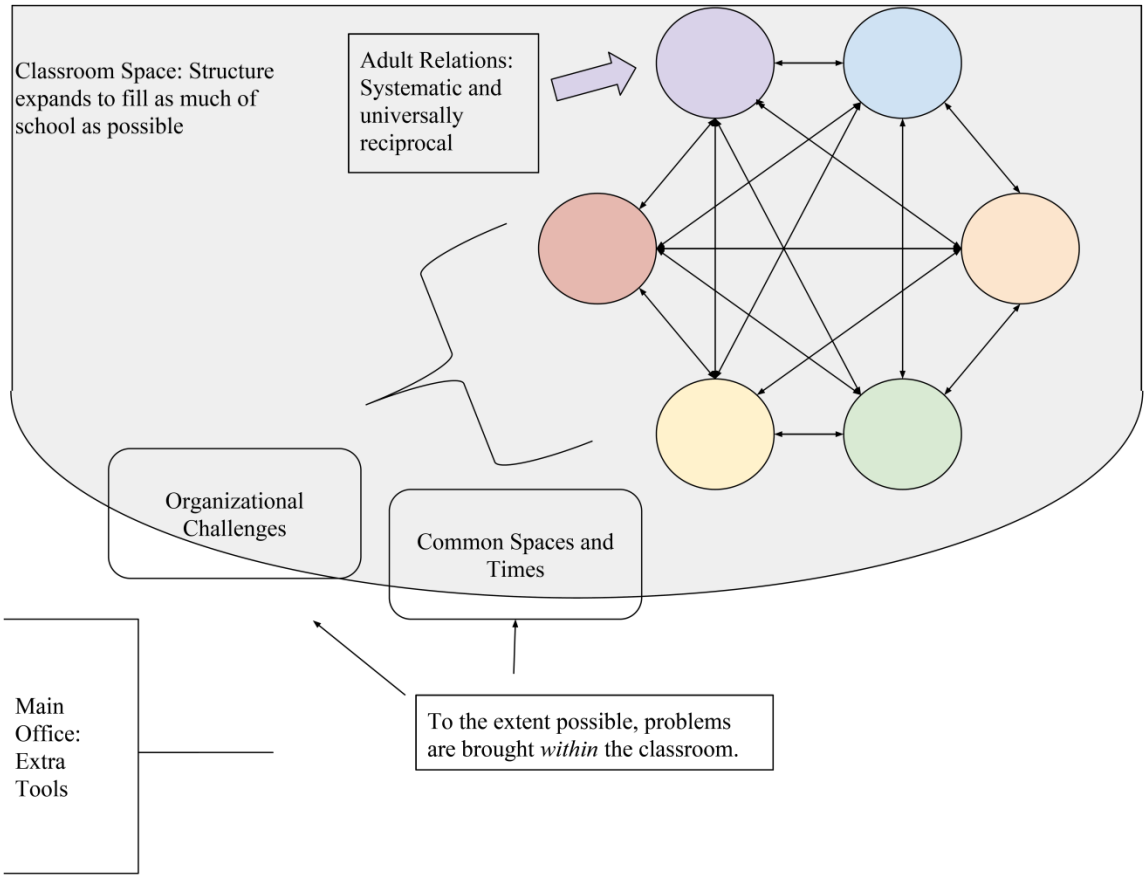
organizational aspects of care in loose/tight schools are often addressed by a small group of people, and in limited, rather than comprehensive, ways.

In some ways, I've painted a pessimistic picture of loose/tight schools because I've largely highlighted deficits in the way the prevailing power structure at these schools addresses challenges to caring relations in the school. I do want to highlight some advantages enjoyed by loose/tight schools as well, especially in contradistinction to tight/loose schools (addressed below). First, loose/tight schools do afford teachers considerable independence and power within their classrooms. Second, although adult relations at loose/tight schools tend to be ad hoc and based on trust, there is no reason why these relationships could not be widespread. Reciprocal trusting (and caring) relations abounded amongst Sun Valley's math teachers, for example. Allison, the principal, is optimistic about her ability to build a higher density of caring, trusting relationships amongst staff over time- she expressed a feeling that until now, staff members had been "waiting her out," expecting her to stay 4-5 years like most previous principals. Finally, compared to tight/loose schools, it is much easier to begin and sustain working in a loose/tight school. Although change may happen more slowly, the embodied effects of the change (in terms of stable personnel) are likely to be longer lasting.

The students I spoke to at Sun Valley mostly (and most of the time) did not experience school as an uncaring place. Rather, they often felt uncertain or apprehensive about certain aspects of school life. Their experiences in classrooms varied widely, but the rules of the classroom do not extend to hallway; this was often a source of

apprehension. I turn now to tight/loose schools, an altogether different environment, shown in Figure 20.

Figure 20: Tight/Loose Schools



Although neither school is an extreme example of loose/tight or tight/loose, Cedarlane Academy is closest to a tight/loose school in this study. In tight/loose schools, to the extent possible, common and organizational challenges are brought within the classroom. By "classroom" here, I don't mean merely the physical space, but also within teachers' and adults' sphere of acknowledged power and expectations. In some cases, common problems are literally brought within the classroom space (e.g., the classroom as a lunchroom). In other cases, though, the classroom expands into the hallways (e.g., in

managing transitions). The social discourses that often govern extra-classroom interactions in loose/tight schools are, to the extent possible, eliminated and replaced with explicit structures in tight/loose schools (Giroux, 2006).

As noted above, treaties (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985) are not permitted at Cedarlane Academy, nor would they be at any tight/loose school. At tight/loose schools, structure must precede and undergird much of school life both in and out of the classroom. Consequently, to the extent that expectations are unsatisfactorily met, school adults at tight/loose schools engage in *skirmishes* to establish the borders of acceptable conduct. Conflict, especially low-level correction, is more prevalent in tight/loose schools that in loose/tight schools because the terms of engagement are not up for negotiation.

Because expectations are common, and driven by a common vision, there is an expectation of collaboration. As a result, it is assumed that school adults have mutually reciprocal relationships characterized by care and trust. Importantly, these relationships are systematic: by the nature of the school adults must collaborate and trust one another. Because the level of structure and monitoring of students in the school is very high, many decisions that might be made individually or in a small group at a loose/tight school are made with a large teacher team or as a school in a tight/loose school. Furthermore, school adults are expected to be able to appropriate one another's power in service of the common vision: classrooms overlap in tight/loose schools in a way unfathomable in loose/tight schools.

The authority principle that Waller (1932) argued is the bedrock of all schools is much more *evident* at tight/loose schools than at loose/tight schools. It is clear that at

Cedarlane Academy, Hannah is the decision-maker, and that decisions flow from her. At the same time, the micropolitics of Cedarlane Academy are driven by an authentic feeling that teachers support one another and sustained, vigorous dialogue about decisions that affect the school (Ball, 1980; Blase, 1991). Experience is a major source of power at Cedarlane Academy, especially because the school has such a steep learning curve for new teachers.

This steep learning curve often did produce exasperation (though of different sorts) in both experienced and inexperienced teachers. For inexperienced teachers, there was a sense that they had support from Hannah (the director) and the more experienced teachers, but "they can only help so much." Learning the school's many systems was simply an uphill climb. For experienced teachers, though, there was often a sense of expending their own relational and positional power to intervene on behalf of teachers who were not as skilled. They recognized the importance of maintaining uniform high standards, but found it difficult and emotionally exhausting to perform *extra* emotional labor in other classrooms (Hargreaves, 1998; Zembylas, 2003).

One important note is that although the relationships amongst staff members at Cedarlane Academy were authentically caring, this may not be a characteristic of tight/loose schools generally. Because these relationships are structured, there is the possibility that they may be inauthentically caring, or instrumental. Authentic caring relationships amongst staff members may be typical of *well-functioning* tight/loose schools. In part, this is precisely because the amount of emotional labor expended at maintaining these sorts of adult relationships at tight/loose schools is high.

Certainly tight/loose schools are defined by high expectations of emotional labor in student/teacher relationships as well (Hargreaves, 1998). In addition to being a challenging environment to master technically, Cedarlane Academy teachers are expected to care about more aspects of their students actions and emotions (in school at least) than at loose/tight schools. In a highly structured environment, there is the easy possibility that this care could become ritualized (McLaren, 1986) or performative (Ball, 2003)- that care could be replaced by structure (Hoffman, 2009). For most teachers at Cedarlane Academy, and especially the most experienced teachers, this did not seem to be the case. Again, though, the possibility of structure replacing care is a disadvantage that is faced by tight/loose schools generally, and seems not to have befallen Cedarlane Academy.

One disadvantage of tight/loose schools that did befall Cedarlane Academy, especially at the middle school grades, was high staff turnover. Finding teachers who are both willing and able to master both the structures and commit to the vision of the school has been an ongoing challenge, and each time a burnt out experienced teacher or overwhelmed novice teacher leaves the school, it increases the pressure on the remaining experienced teachers (as well as the demands on their power in the school).

Although tight/loose schools aspire to bring problems “into” the classroom, there are still inevitable reaches in the school, and times in the day, to where teachers’ power does not extend. For example, Helena was teased in the bathroom because she didn’t speak Somali. At the beginning and end of the day, when there is no clear role for the time, and students are engaged in a variety of different activities, teachers’ power becomes vague and uncertain. At Cedarlane Academy, staff responded to each of these

challenges by trying to introduce more structure and more personnel, but no matter how widely the net of adult power and surveillance is cast, it does not cover everything (Foucault, 1980).

The main office in tight/loose schools, as at loose/tight schools, is a source of extra resources; however, at tight/loose schools the scope of these resources is considerably less. Anya, the office assistant at Cedarlane Academy reported that "sometimes you just have to be a mom." However, in contrast to Katia at Sun Valley, Anya's mothering was often limited to playing nursemaid to students who were ill or injured, not acting as an administrator-cum-social worker.

The structure of power at tight/loose schools bears on caring in a number of ways. As noted above, tight/loose schools place considerably higher expectations on teachers' emotional labor. For some teachers, and perhaps for most teachers in ineffective tight/loose schools, this emotional labor may become routine and inauthentic. At Cedarlane Academy, finding teachers who could master both the technical aspects of the school and care for students was a challenge. As Hannah noted, it took three science teachers "to find someone who believes in the kids, who thinks they can do a real science lesson and cares about them that way." The staff turnover also further increased the emotional burden on longer-tenured staff.

The other ways that power intersects with caring in tight/loose schools implicate the possibility of structure replacing authentic care. For example, the curriculum at Cedarlane Academy emphasizes allowing students to explore their own identity, especially in the context of global citizenship- it encourages teachers to deeply know

students both personally and culturally. However, it is not altogether clear that the expectations for student behavior at Cedarlane Academy are themselves culturally responsive or attentive to students' needs (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006; Rolon Dow, 2012). The efforts to highlight student emotion and identity (which students feel is caring) may be pre-empted by structural emphasis on ways of acting that students find uncaring. This problem may be especially acute for teachers still struggling to fully implement the wide set of controls expected at Cedarlane Academy (or tight/loose schools generally).

Another example: at Cedarlane Academy, all teachers were expected to have a vision of students' future power as global citizens. Among the teachers with the most consistent caring relations this vision was very well developed in terms of both classroom activities and field trips- students found this empowering (Oakes & Rogers, 2003). Oakes and Rogers (2007) highlight the importance for students of "learning *to be* powerful" in order to effect political and social change (p. 202). Students and staff did indeed participate in events and do coursework intended to foster social change, especially regarding the 45th President and pervasive Islamophobia in American society. However, although students were encourages to exercise social power, they did not feel able to exercise power at school- recall Sahra's observation that she did not feel there is a way to respectfully disagree with teachers.

A culturally grounded caring that prizes students' identities and funds of knowledge is clearly the intent at Cedarlane Academy, and in some senses it is realized (Antrop Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006; Bartlett & Garcia, 2012; Rolon Dow, 2012;

Thompson, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999). In other ways, however, it is kept at arms length by the policies and practices used to arrange school life both in and out of classrooms. If culturally grounded caring is simply allowing students to explore and highlight their identity in classrooms and on field trips, and rearranging the school calendar to suit students' cultural needs, Cedarlane Academy meets the mark. However, if a culturally grounded caring also must consist in the fiber of the school and shape interpersonal interactions between students, staff members, and parents, then *structure* at Cedarlane Academy disrupts caring. This challenge at the intersection of culture and care applies to tight/loose schools.

At tight/loose schools, some aspects of caring in organizational context are addressed, while others are potential blind spots (Tronto, 2010). At Cedarlane Academy for example, the vision and many protocols in the school explicitly outline the purposes of care in the school: to educate and empower a generation of global citizens. For better or worse, discussions about power are largely settled in favor of inducing students to do what school adults see as their best interest. There is room in the school for conversations about power relations and purpose in caring, albeit limited to the existing vision of the school. However, in some ways by design, Cedarlane Academy is less able to attend to the *particularities* of care in an organization. For example, ENVoY, the non-verbal behavior management system is designed to encourage teachers to engage with the entire class, and limit power struggles with individual students. Of course, teachers can and do engage with individual students, but there is less room in the context of all of the structures to pay "attention to human activities as particular and admitting of other

possible ways of doing them and to diverse humans having diverse preferences about how needs might be met" (Tronto, 2010, p. 162). In this way too, structure may keep conversations about the particularities of care at arms length.

In short, the school level practices, policies and structures at tight/loose schools are designed to facilitate a high level of caring, and often succeed, but the non-negotiability of the structures may also backfire and keep caring at arms length. If the staff of a school believes that structure is an important antecedent to care, then in order for there to be authentic care, there must be structure. This is why it is crucial for staff members at Cedarlane Academy to believe that they can "solve" problems, and not merely ameliorate them.

Students at both schools mostly (and most of the time) did not experience school as an uncaring place. At Sun Valley Middle School, student experiences varied widely in classrooms and common spaces and times were a source of apprehension. At Cedarlane Academy, the main source of apprehension was teachers who did not know the structures to which students were accustomed, and the resulting disorder that ensued. In order for students to have a caring school experience at Cedarlane Academy, teachers must be adept at producing and enforcing the explicit guidelines that students are used to following.

Thus far, I've focused largely on the first word in tight/loose and loose/tight schools- the way schools use power to deal with organizational problems and common spaces, and the implications of this for caring relations in the school. I want to turn

somewhat more briefly to the second words in the pairing, because in many ways these second words reflect the most aspirational vision for each type of school.

In loose/tight schools, the tightness refers to what happens in the classroom. Specifically, teachers are expected to have power within their classroom, and fairly wide discretion about how to use that power to produce caring. Allison, the principal of Sun Valley Middle School explicitly embraced this idea when she suggested that one of her approaches to decision-making involved making decisions that felt distant from students and learning herself (management decisions), in order to maximize the time teachers can spend doing "awesome work with kids."

The tightness here refers to teachers being able to use a wide variety of ways of managing a classroom, delivering instruction, and supporting students in ways that cater to the teacher's strengths. It is a vote of confidence in teachers. In its ideal form, skilled and effective teachers would have classes that look very different, but which have in common that they offer students social support and a family environment conducive to learning. In practice, of course, results vary. Some teachers produced classrooms with dense and stable caring relations. Other teachers leaned more heavily on a prevailing discourse of compliance with adult instructions and negotiated a treaty based on a division of time and efforts at engagement.

In some ways, the looseness in tight/loose schools is more complex. If loose/tight schools push teachers' individual inclinations and dispositions to the fore, the policies and practices at tight/loose schools may serve to undermine teacher individualism in addition to creating a common schoolwide structure. At Cedarlane Academy, in part due

to the novice status of much of the class, the ideal of loosness was rarely realized. Nonetheless, I'll try to offer a few examples to clarify the concept.

One day, in Ms. Jenna's class they were doing a fun lesson involving designing a poem that students would act out in order to explain a literary concept (e.g., alliteration). The class was structured and well-scaffolded, but students were also occupied in engaging activities and working together in groups. As it came closer to time to present, Ms. Jenna was talking about note taking. She said, rhetorically, "you can choose not to take notes but what might happen if you didn't really know?" A bit later, just before the presentations, she added, "make some decisions about your notes. Remember, we are writing on this paper." The students in this case actually do have a choice about what to write, if anything. The class is so well-managed, and the lesson so well-planned that there is room to allow students discretion.

To take a different example, one day in Ms. Clarissa's class the students were working on their Lego League project. Ms. Clarissa was cold-calling students to ask questions about what they needed to accomplish that day. When she called on Astur (one of the focal students for this project), Astur answered in an inaudible whisper. Ms. Clarissa smiled and said "Voice girl! …. I heard you in the hallway, so I know you have it." The class collectively said "Oooohhh." Astur smirked, and repeated her answer in a louder voice. Ms. Clarissa very rarely employed such an informal register with her students- when she did it was strategically and with attention- the tightness of the class produces space for the looseness. Later in the same class, a group of boys accidentally smashed blueberries on their Lego League board. I failed to record exactly what was said,

but noted that the tenor of the class at the moment was “a little funny, and a little serious.” There is room to laugh at a funny mistake, but also an awareness that the problem must be fixed.

Later in the year, I asked Ms. Clarissa about how she deals with behavior problems if there is a group of students. She said, to start, “Usually my first thing would be to separate them and if they know what the expectation is and are doing it intentionally they can fix it by…”

She paused, and then continued, “That’s if we’re doing Lego League. It’s very different than if I’m teaching a standard lesson. When I’m teaching a standard lesson, misbehavior doesn’t happen really.” I asked, “why is that?” She replied, “Because I know where they’re seated at, I have a plan, and I know how to be in my management spot to manage them.”

It sounds, perhaps, egotistical, but it also appeared to be true. Ms. Clarissa was adept enough in the use of structures and her own planning that students simply did not misbehave in her class, and this fact created room for looseness and caring relationships. For other less experienced teachers though, getting to the point of looseness within tightness was a challenge. For example, I talked to one of Ms. Clarissa’s long-term substitutes after she left for maternity leave. He reported:

> I think students have short term memories where they remember that they love Ms. Clarissa now, but in the beginning of the year, she was doing the same exact things that we were doing and they hated it. We'll have that relationship, but right now we have to go through putting structure in place. Not because it's what we want to do and we love this part of the job, but it's so that all 24 students have an equal opportunity at learning.

In part due to the standards of behavior at Cedarlane Academy, and in part due to the prevailing norm at Sun Valley that students comply with teachers' instructions, classrooms of beginning teachers at Cedarlane feel chaotic compared to beginning teachers at Sun Valley Middle School. At Cedarlane, teachers must learn to leverage a wide array of systems in order to produce consistent caring relations and productive classrooms. At Sun Valley (and at loose/tight schools generally), teachers need to learn how to leverage themselves and their own strengths.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The motivating premise for this study is that, in their efforts to care for students, school adults must balance caring with positional and relational power. Frequently, this balance is in terms of care and control in the classroom. At other times, school adults work together to make decisions about how best to care for students at the school level. One important purpose of this study was theory building: to develop an understanding how school adults, individually and collectively balance their competing imperatives to care for students and to produce a stable, consistent learning environment. In this section, I begin to integrate the two core categories of the theory detailed above, of consistent and inconsistent caring classroom relations and tight/loose and loose/tight schools.

In one important sense, this study falls short of its goal of producing a fully-fledged grounded theory of caring and power in schools. One challenge in producing such a theory is parsing school adults' motivations and actions at the organizational level: what are adults doing to build caring relations in schools, and what are they doing for some other reason? Caring is enmeshed in the fabric of schools; it is the "glue that binds teachers and students together and makes life in classrooms meaningful" (Noblit, Rogers, & McCadden, 2001, p. 680). Consequently, while it is fairly easy to see the ways that caring and power intersect in the classroom, it is somewhat more difficult to tease out the ways they intersect at the organizational level. Instead, I've tried to understand how the ways that school adults make decisions and exercise power at the school organization level *impact* students' experiences of being cared for in and out of school. Moreover, when one places such potent social phenomena as caring and power alongside one

another, they bear on the broader emotional life of both classrooms and school organizations and reveal something of the broader emotional constellation of schools. I conclude this section with a pair of lingering theoretical questions that may aid in the fuller integration of the theoretical work in this study.

Whether a school is predominantly tight/loose or loose/tight bears on life in classrooms as well. Figures 21 and 22, below, highlight some of the tradeoffs inherent in each approach.

Figure 21: Assets and Tradeoffs for Tight/Loose Schools

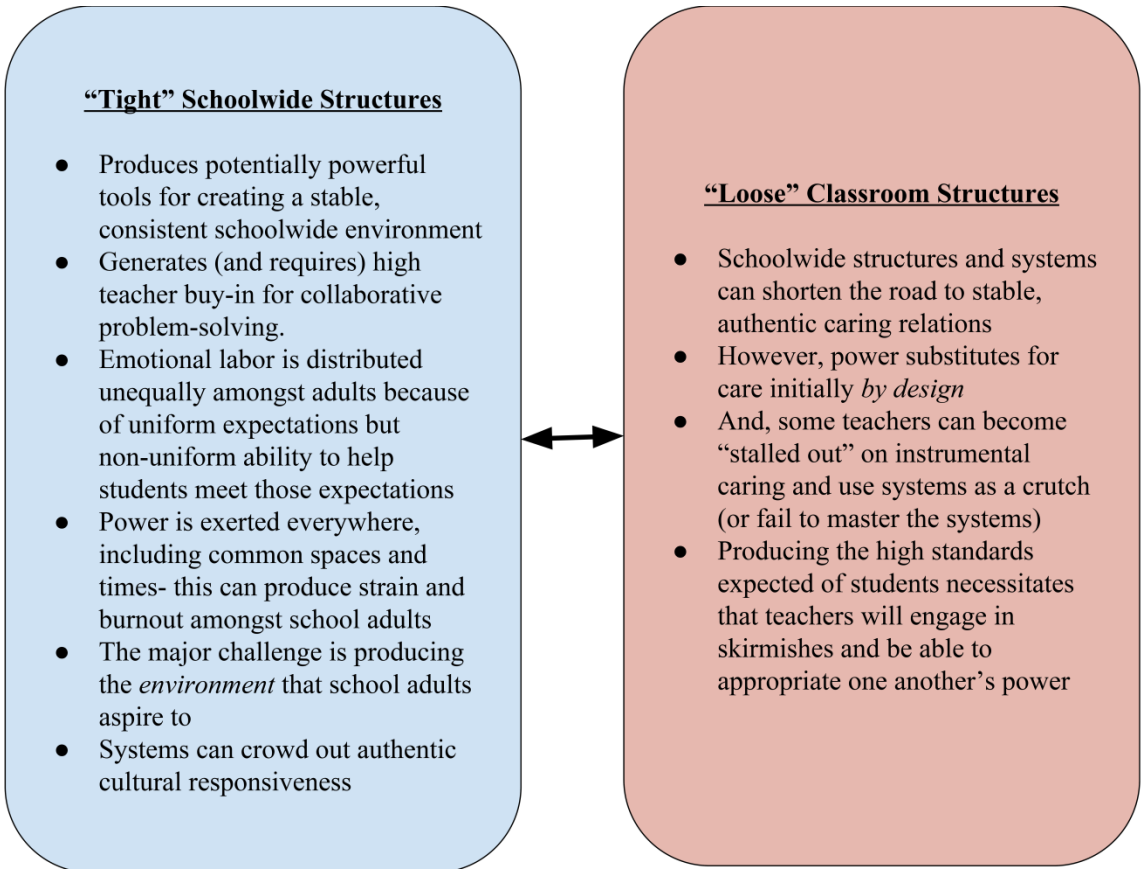
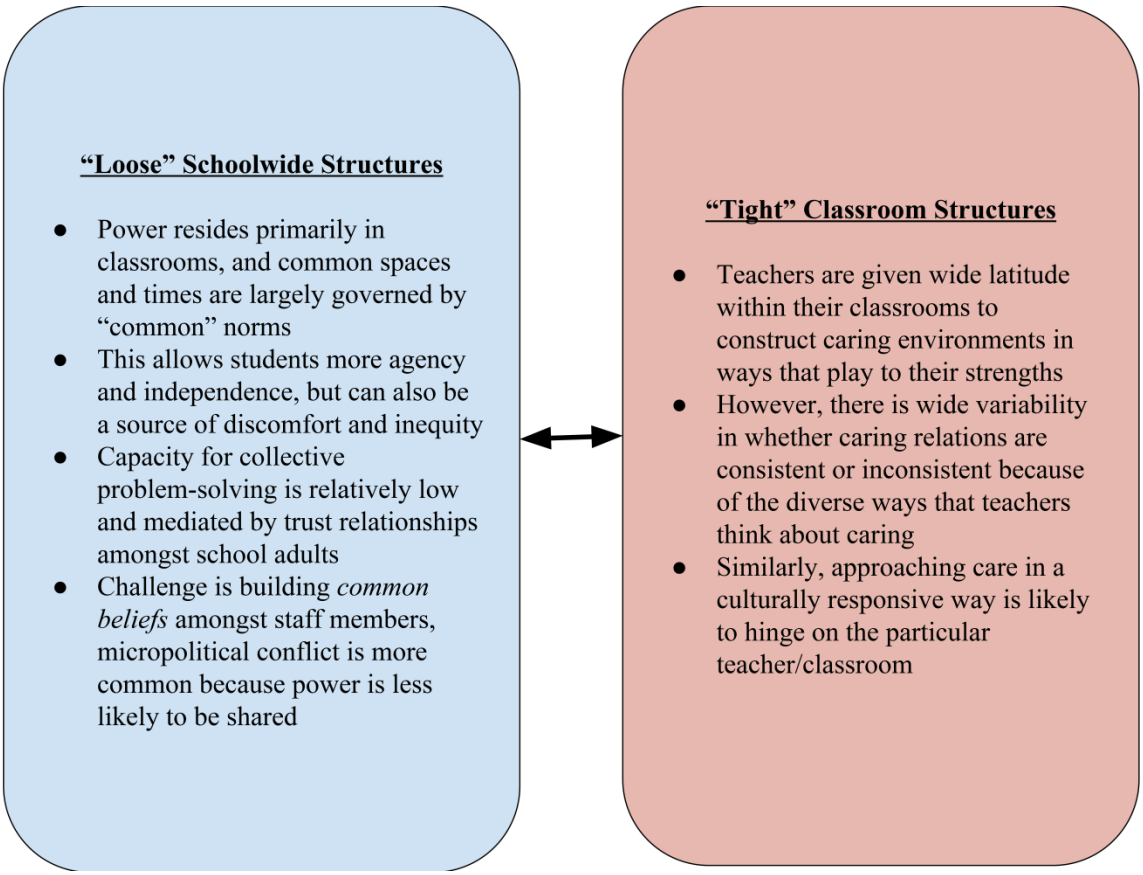


Figure 22: Assets and Tradeoffs for Loose/Tight Schools



Throughout this study, several ideas emerged as especially important forces at both the classroom and organizational level: beliefs and judiciousness. At Cedarlane Academy, staff members broadly shared similar underlying beliefs about students' abilities, and how best to meet students' needs to help students realize their potential. They also generally believed that the other adults at their school thought similarly about

students (and identified a lack of shared beliefs as the most common reason why teachers at the school didn't stay). At Sun Valley Middle School, beliefs about students were more diverse, and teachers recognized that they occasionally thought about teaching, caring for students, and the purpose of school in different ways. For the most part, this was not problematic because teachers had wide latitude within their own classrooms. In general, though, it was difficult for teachers with widely divergent beliefs about schooling to make and implement truly organization-wide decisions about how best to care for students.

This study also revealed that there is no general replacement for judiciousness by school adults. At both schools, adults' ability to make sense of complex emotional situations in ways that were viewed by students as fair, helpful, and respectful of students' dignity was essential to producing a caring environment both in and out of classrooms. At Sun Valley Middle School, teachers were often left to their own devices to navigate these challenges. Because of the fairly diverse ways that teachers thought about caring, adults were hesitant to allow others to lean on their own positional and relational power (including those in the main office). At Cedarlane Academy, school adults could appropriate one another's power, but this placed a burden on more judicious (or more *consistently* judicious) teachers to make up for poor decisions made by less consistently judicious teachers. In schools with more shared beliefs amongst adults, there is additional capacity to elevate judiciousness to a schoolwide force.

One additional concept also helps to illuminate why school caring and power intersect in the way that they do in these schools: comfort. At both schools, teachers with

inconsistent or unstable caring relations with students were likely to use care as a strategy for relationship building, rather than actively inquiring about students' needs. They were likely to use their relational power, in other words, in ways that produced greater transactional comfort for them. At Cedarlane Academy, some teachers also relied on schoolwide systems to produce comfort, rather than as a means to slingshot them toward stable, authentic caring relationships.

I argue above that teachers with less consistent caring relations are more likely to view control as a substitute for caring. Teachers with more stable caring relations see care and control as complementary and reinforcing ways to meet student needs. From an organizational perspective, the substitute and complement heuristic applies mainly to schools that are more loose/tight than tight/loose. Adults in tight/loose schools, as noted above, can unintentionally replace stable caring relationships with systems, and structure can crowd out cultural responsiveness.

In loose/tight schools, though, *comfort* can be a substitute for caring. Because teachers are largely free to create classroom environments as they see fit, teachers can make choices that create more comfort for them. Moreover, they can (to a large extent) choose the manner and degree of their collaboration with other school adults. Put differently, they can use their power to insulate themselves from discomfort. However, comfort and caring can also be complements in loose/tight schools. Because teachers in loose/tight schools are more able to sign their own "treaties," they can build authentically caring relationships based on uses of control and authority that make the most sense to them. Although schoolwide systems can be a source of support, they can also produce

discomfort for teachers that may impede caring. However, when teachers have more ability to construct their own classroom cultures, comfort and care may compound one another.

Two largely theoretical questions may help to generate a more fully integrated theory of caring and power in school organizations. First, what might it look like for schools to have highly productive collaboration that is not focused on creating common structures, but rather on producing common beliefs about students? Second, what might it look like to design schoolwide systems that are culturally rather than structurally focused- that is, systems that give teachers latitude for implementation but are focused on attending to particular student needs? Further study of these questions is warranted, as is study of several additional questions described below.

One final weakness of this study bears mention, because it is also an important avenue for future exploration. Although I've attempted throughout this study to be attentive to cultural, gendered, and racial aspects of caring, analysis through these lenses has been a peripheral rather than central aspect of this work. In some ways this is peculiar: the late-20th century scholarship on an ethic of care mooted caring as an especially feminine way of approaching ethical questions (Gilligan, 1982). Noddings (2013) suggests that good caring in schools is not simply *familial*, but *motherly*. Similarly, other analyses have focused on the ways that cultural and racial differences between students and adults can result in alienation and disaffection from school (Antrop Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999).

A gender- or race-based analysis of this data may shed additional light on the ways that these schools do and do not promote caring equitably. Furthermore, it would likely shed light on what it means for caring to be culturally responsive, and how schools successfully or unsuccessfully bridge differences between home and school. The main strength of this study is the findings that relate to emotional and organizational intersections of caring and power, but analysis from a more gender-, race-, and culture-based frame is likely to be fruitful.

Contributions to Theory and Implications for Practice, and Areas for Further Research

This study makes several important contributions to theories of both caring and power in schools, and has implications for school leadership and policymakers. First, this study bears out both Noddings (2005; 2006; 2013) and Thompson (1998). One implication for school leaders and policymakers based on this study appears to be the necessity of attending to *specific* aspects of culture and difference, and not ideas of culture and difference generically. Meeting the widely varying academic, social, and emotional needs of a diverse group of students is profoundly challenging, but efforts that focus on building specific knowledge and skills are likely to meet with more success than efforts to produce an environment that is *broadly* more caring or inclusive. Although this study offers some insight into how to build culturally grounded caring into the organizational fabric of the school, it does more to highlight the challenges in doing so. This would be a fruitful area for further research.

An additional finding of this study is that emotional labor is shared unequally among school adults (Hargreaves, 1998; Zembylas, 2011). The emotional investments required of experienced and skilled teachers at tight/loose schools is very high. At loose/tight schools, the differences depend more on the preferences of individual teachers, but it is clear that the emotional costs of caring for students is unequally distributed across schools. If caring is the central to the purpose of schooling, then recognizing teachers who are relationally exceptional and contribute disproportionately to the school's environment should be a policy goal on par with recognizing teachers who promote exceptional academic growth.

Tronto (2010) exhorts staff members in organizations to pay attention to the politics, purpose, and particularity of care- issues that arise in organizational efforts to care but are largely absent in families. She recommends that in organizational settings engaged in care work (such as schools) space must be created for robust conversations about these topics. The present study also highlights that, in some cases, there may be tradeoffs amongst these concerns. For example, although Cedarlane Academy's vision explicitly outlines the purposes of care (and how best to realize these purposes was the subject of frequent dialogue amongst staff members), the overlying purpose of care appears to have crowded out the *particular* needs of certain students in some cases. Furthermore, the intentness of the staff on achieving their purpose in care also incented them to make more muscular use of their own positional or relational power. Further work on caring in organizations should attend to how aspects of organizational caring may be in tension with one another.

Finally, there are two dilemmas of organization that have implications for school leaders and policymakers, but also call for considerable additional research. First, it appears from this study that tight/loose schools are characterized by a high degree of staff collaboration, but that collaboration in these schools is also highly structured. One upshot of this seems to be that solutions to organizational challenges are also structured, and that in conflict situations power supercedes caring in these schools. Staff members at Cedarlane Academy (closest to a tight/loose school in this study) were on good terms, but staff turnover and burnout were also high (Ball 1980; Blase, 1991). On the other hand, in loose/tight schools, collaboration was less strong and tended to focus on more limited problems (Hargreaves, 1991). One area for future research that bears on building caring school environments is how best to produce schools where collaborative bonds are strong, but not highly structured. One insight from Sun Valley Middle School is that when teachers' sense of caring for one another was grounded in being able to help one another in the classroom (i.e., improving instruction), and that trust from these bonds increased the group's capacity for addressing other problems as well.

The second area for additional research is how to encourage teachers to make inquiry about student needs a more regular part of their practice. For some teachers at both schools, caring was a *strategy* for building student relationships- a routine (ritualized? performed?) practice (Ball, 2003; McLaren, 1987). For other teachers though, the basis of their caring was learning to understand students better in order to better meet their needs. These teachers consistently had the most consistent caring relations with students. Professional development designed to increase this capacity, and research onto how best

to sharpen teachers' ability to seek, reflect on, and use information on students' needs is likely to improve students' sense of being cared for in schools.

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Appendix A: School Practitioner Consent Form

Students and Their Communities Study

School Practitioner Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research project that is designed to explore how students and teachers think about caring and control in school. Students will take photographs (based on a series of prompts) and then participate in brief interviews about them with researchers. A key goal of this project is to empower students to become actively involved in sharing the experiences they have each day. A second goal is to explore how educators think about the same concepts we are asking students to explore in their interviews.

What is my role?

In this project, you will be invited to participate in a pair of interviews so we can better understand your thinking about caring for students in your professional practice. The interviews will last approximately 40 minutes and will be scheduled for a time and place that is most convenient for you.

In addition, we may ask you to briefly assist us in facilitating the student photography portion of the project. You will not be asked to participate in any student interviews, merely to help us identify and meet with students to get them started taking photographs.

The students assigned to your classroom will use school technology during the project.

Confidentiality:

All information shared during any interviews will be confidential. Pseudonyms and/or numerical codes will be used so that information shared is not directly linked to any particular participant.

Potential benefits and risks to participants

Students are instructed to take photos of the spaces they spend time on a regular basis, meaning there is minimal risk.

All information shared in interviews will be confidential. Any writings or publications that result from this project will not include participants' names or any identifying information. It is possible that you may feel uncomfortable answering a question, though the questions are not designed to make you feel uncomfortable. You may choose not to answer any question you don't wish to answer.

The benefits of this project will vary by participant. Many students and teachers enjoy talking about their school community. This project is purposefully designed to give a voice to students to share about their school; it does not, however, require students to share. Another potential benefit is that the project will have positive impacts on the classroom community as students and teachers think about engagement and caring.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in the research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or with your school. If you decide participate, you are free to withdraw that permission at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The primary investigator for this study is Jeff Walls. **You are encouraged** to contact him at 952-221-4619 (cell phone) or wall0566@umn.edu with any questions you have now or later. You are also welcome to contact his advisor with any questions: Karen Seashore (612-626-8971; klouis@umn.edu). If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) or his advisers, **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D5

I agree to participate in this research project.

Name (Please print): _____Date:_____

Signature: _____

Appendix B: Students' Parent Consent Form

January 2017

Dear Families –

Hello! My name is Jeff Walls. I am writing to inform you of a project that I would like to conduct at your child's school, XXXXXXXXXXXXX

In the upcoming weeks, your child will have the opportunity to use iPads to take photographs of places in the school where they feel well cared for, and places that they don't like as much. We hope to talk to your child about these pictures to understand how they feel about school.

I hope that with the children's help we will learn more about how children learn best. This is important because we know that when students feel like they are engaged and belong in their school, they learn better!

Before you read the materials that are enclosed, please note that if you prefer that your child not be included in this study, that is perfectly fine. Please read this letter and the consent form thoroughly before making a decision. If you decide not to allow your child to participate in the study, he/she will still be included in the normal class activities, which may include other children discussing their photographs.

My apologies for the long and wordy form—it is required by the University of Minnesota, which provides oversight for this work.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I would appreciate it if you could have your child return the form to his/her teacher as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Jeff Walls
952.221.4619
Wall0566@umn.edu

Students and Their Communities Study

Student Consent Form[1]

My name is Jeff Walls. I am a graduate student at the University of Minnesota. I am writing to inform you of a research study that I would like to conduct in your child's school, St. Anthony Middle School, with the help of your child's teacher. We want to understand what helps students feel engaged in school, and where in the school they feel cared for.

This research study is being conducted by: Jeff Walls, a Ph.D candidate in Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Minnesota. The research is performed under the guidance of our advisor, Dr. Karen Seashore, Ph.D., University of Minnesota. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing for your child to participate in the study.

What is my child's role?

As part of the project, your child, along with other students in his/her class, will take photographs, in order to share their perspectives on, for example, what he/she likes in the school, and what he/she doesn't like in the school.

As part of this project, your child will:

- Take photographs of their school based on a series of prompts.
- Participate in a brief interview with researchers to explain the photographs and how he/she feels cared for in school.

Your child will use technology available at school for taking photographs.

Confidentiality:

All information shared during any interviews will be confidential. Please note that the photographs your child creates as part of this study may be shared with their classmates, teachers, and other school staff. No photographs will be used outside of your child's school in ways in which individuals in the photographs are identifiable or in ways that your child is identifiable. At any time, you or your child may ask us not to use a specific photograph(s).

Because I am a teacher, if your child reports that he or she is being hurt by an adult, I am required by law to report what the child said to the police.

Potential benefits and risks of the project and participating in the study

[1] Adapted from consent forms used in the University of Eastern Michigan's Photovoice Project.

Students will be instructed to take photographs/videos in the spaces they spend time on a regular basis. It is possible that a student may be uncomfortable answering a question, but students can choose not to answer any question if they wish. The researchers have written questions to make students feel as comfortable as possible.

The benefits of this project will vary by student. Many children enjoy sharing their experiences in school and taking pictures of their school. This project is purposefully designed to give a voice to each student in the class to share their photographs; it does not, however, require students to share. There are no additional benefits or risks for participating in the study.

Compensation:
There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
While all students will participate in the community exploration project as part of their regular classroom expectations, participation in the research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or with St. Anthony Middle School. If you decide to allow your child to participate, you are free to withdraw that permission at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
The primary investigator for this study if Jeff Walls. **You are encouraged** to contact him at 952-221-4619 (cell phone) or wall0566@umn.edu with any questions you have now or later. You are also welcome to contact his advisor with any questions: Karen Seashore (612-626-8971; klouis@umn.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) or his advisers, **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650. I will give you a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Declaration of consent:

➔ I grant permission for my child to take photographs to inform this study

Child's Name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

➔ I grant permission for my child to be invited to participate in a brief 20 minute interview

Child's Name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: Student Assent Form

Students and Their Communities Study

Student Assent Form

I am doing a study at your school about places in the school where students feel cared about. Your teachers will work with me to help organize the study.

I am asking if you are willing to share about your experiences in school so that we can try to understand more about how students learn. We will ask you to take a few pictures of places in the school, and then meet with you to talk to you about the pictures and why you chose those places.

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to meet for about 10 minutes with me or one of the other researchers working with me during the week of _____ . I will ask you 4-5 questions each time we meet. You can decide whether or not you want to answer each question. If there is a question you do not want to answer, you can just skip that question or say, "pass." There will not be any consequences if you choose not to answer a question. In addition, I will ask you if it is okay to record your answers. This is so I can listen closely to your responses and not have to be writing down notes. I can then go back later and listen to your answers if I forget what you shared. I am the only person that will hear the recording. It will not be shared with anyone else. You can decide whether or not you want me to record the conversation.

You can ask questions at any moment. In addition, if you decide you do not want to participate in the study, you can quit at any time. No one will get mad at you if you decide you don't want to continue with the study. Remember, these questions are asking what you know. There are not right or wrong answers.

Signing here means that you have read this paper or had it read to you and that you are willing to be in this study. If you don't want to be in this study, don't sign. Remember, being in this study is up to you, and no one will be mad at you if you don't sign this or even if you change your mind later.

Signature of participant_____

Signature of researcher _____

Date_____

Appendix D: Semi-structured Interview Protocol for School Practitioners

School Staff Questions

- Why did you become a teacher?
- We are interested in hearing about your daily routines and experiences at ___ school. Tell us about a typical day in your classroom.
- How do you try to show students that you care for them?
    - In your classroom, or in the classroom of another teacher, what would you look for to see if that classroom is a "caring space" or a "caring community"?
- Can you describe a time when you and a student disagreed, but you pushed the student to do something? How did you decide what was in the student's best interest? What was the outcome?
    - Can you describe a time when a group of students disagreed with you? How did you approach this situation?
- How do you communicate with students' families?
    - Can you think of a time when a student and his/her family were resistant or uncomfortable with something at school? How did you approach this situation?
- Describe your daily interaction with colleagues at your school.
- We want to understand how staff members work together to make decisions about school and students. Can you describe a recent time when you worked together with other staff to make a decision?
    - Can you think of an example of a time when people disagreed on how to approach an issue? What happens if staff members disagree? How are conflicts worked out at this school?
- In your experience, who has a voice in decision-making at this school? How can you tell?
- What do you think it is important for your colleagues at this school to believe about students? Do you think that most of them do believe this?
- What do you think are the most important school policies/practices that shape outcomes for students?

- What do you see as the ideal role for school leaders in your school to support your work?
- What do you see as potential barriers to achieving your school's mission?

Appendix E: Semi-structured Interview Protocol for Students

Student Questions

- Photo elicitation prompts:
    - Please take pictures of places in the school where you feel cared for, and also places where you feel that people don't care.
    - Go through pictures...
- General questions:
    - How do you know when a teacher cares about you? What do they say or do?
    - Think of a time when you disagreed with one of your teachers. What did you do?
    - Think about school and your family at home? How is the time you spend in school similar to time you spend with your family? How is it different?
    - When a student is getting in trouble, do the teachers here treat that student fairly?
    - Think of a time when your teacher made you do something that you weren't excited to do: what happened?
        - What if the whole class doesn't want to do something?
- Do you think that most students at this school care about one another?
- Do you think that teachers at this school care if students are kind to one another? How can you tell?

Appendix F: Open Coding Codebook Frequency Table

94 Codes or subcodes were coded at least 10 times, and appeared in at least two interviews or observation notes.

Name	Sources	References
Away from group	3	11
Belief in Teachers	4	11
Boy-girl	2	14
Catching things early	3	11
Change	8	15
Changing Community	3	10
Choice	7	18
Classroom v PE	5	14
Clubs	4	11
Co-leading	5	17
Collaboration	16	48
Compliance v Complexity	3	13
Conflict - Student	5	18
Co-teaching	5	18
Criticism	4	13
Day in class - Assessment	3	14
Decision-making v. power	6	19
Different ways of being engaged	4	12
Discipline + Consequences	6	11
Disrespect	4	10
Downside of continuity	4	16

Downside of IB	4	11
Empathy	3	12
Envoy	5	19
Especially hard group GA	6	16
Fairness from teachers	10	21
Figuring Out How to Work Together	8	20
Fitting in	5	11
Following Up	5	13
GA specific stuff	7	12
Hallways	6	11
Handling disagreements	13	26
Hard to find teachers	3	11
Hard to find teachers!	3	13
Hard work	7	12
Helpful	4	12
Homeroom End of Day	4	11
IB	7	13
Individual Students	6	11
Interventions	8	19
Knowing about different people	6	13
Labor Conditions	5	12
Language	3	11
Lunch	6	11
Middle Schoolers	9	14
Mindset	6	12

Negotiation	9	17
Non-teacher care	5	11
Office as positive	5	11
Open Enrollment	4	12
Power in classroom	10	18
Power on Mgmt v Leadership	4	11
Problem Solving	4	11
Racial equity	6	12
Responsibility	6	15
Reward	4	11
Rigor	6	14
Routine	8	13
SAMS Staff Independent	7	12
Schedule - tight plan	7	10
School Home Difference	8	11
Self-control	7	12
Service	8	10
Serving kids needs	8	15
Showing Humor + Caring	8	11
SMART Goals - Performativity	7	14
Social Problems Class	7	13
Space as a problem	8	12
Speaking Up	7	13
Special Education	7	13
Staffing Up	3	11

Stress	5	13
Student Experience	6	14
Students help each other	9	16
Support from School Leaders	14	27
Systems of Care	3	17
Context Switching	4	12
Teacher Leadership	8	13
Teachers care about student interaction	7	12
Testing	3	11
Time	4	11
Transactional	7	10
Transitions	9	17
Trust	8	13
What caring is	20	57
What caring is Student	9	16
What does Traci do	9	11
What should adults believe	16	24
What's Best for Kids	7	14
Who Decides + Why	8	14
Who Needs Care	7	10
Why Enter Profession	14	25
Work w families	10	14